

University of Newcastle

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Doctorate in Educational Psychology

## **Storying Lunchtimes**

**What is the lunchtime supervisors' story of lunchtime?**

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## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Abstract**

The value of children's play is well established in the existing literature. Relevant to this study, previous research has been conducted looking at the benefits of opportunity to play during the school lunchtime. At lunchtime ancillary staff, or lunchtime supervisors, are employed to supervise children.

Lunchtime supervisors are situated in the framework of a school. This context is shared by all those who are a part of that school. As such, supervisors are a part of a complex interacting system. Within this shared context a collective sense of the lunchtime culture is developed. Consistent with this, previous research acknowledges that the views of the supervisors would contribute to the development of the lunchtime culture. Further it is asserted that supervisors' views may be a factor in determining children's lunchtime experiences.

However, the existing research does not give adequate attention to the role of the lunchtime supervisor. Additionally there are few reported studies that attempt to meaningfully explore supervisors' views on lunchtimes more generally. Hence, knowledge and understanding of supervisors' views is very limited. Consequently it has not been feasible to consider how supervisors' views might contribute to the lunchtime culture within the complex interacting school system. Furthermore it has not been possible to infer how supervisors' views might impact on children's lunchtime experiences.

In an attempt to begin to address a lack of knowledge and understanding this study presents a unique insight into supervisors' views about lunchtime at

school. Using a qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews the research explored the lunchtime story of a group of supervisors based at one school.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used as a framework for analysing the supervisors' story. Through this analysis key themes were identified. The themes suggested the primary purpose of school lunchtime, as reflected in the supervisors' story, is for children to develop their present and future autonomy and agency. The supervisors' story identified lunchtime factors that they seem to observe to either challenge or strengthen children's autonomy and agency. The themes further suggest significant belief for supervisors in their role in supporting children to develop autonomy and agency during lunchtime. Moreover, the lunchtime story that they shared embraces their belief that supervisors must develop their own autonomy and agency. Lunchtime factors that both challenge and strengthen supervisors' autonomy and agency were an additional feature of their story.

This research offers a novel perspective on the supervisors' views about lunchtime. It broadens an understanding of their views and connects them to the complex school system and children's lunchtime experiences. To enhance appreciation of the supervisors' story of lunchtime a conceptual framework was developed.



## **Definition of terms**

Within the literature various terms are used for example, playtime; lunchtime; break and recess. This is the period at school, typically outdoors, for children to have a break from indoor tasks. Schools often have a break in the morning. Some schools may have an additional afternoon break. The duration of morning and afternoon break varies from 15 - 20 minutes. Schools also have lunchtime. The lunch period is usually between an hour and an hour and a half. At lunchtime there is an opportunity to eat lunch. Children also have an opportunity to play outside on the school playground.

During the lunchtime adults are employed to supervise the children. The work is part-time, usually between 12 noon and 1.30pm on school days.

Different titles are used within the literature to name the adults whose role it is to monitor the children during the lunchtime. These titles include mid-day supervisor; dinner lady; lunchtime organiser; lunchtime supervisor and mid-day assistant. For the purposes of this study the term 'lunchtime supervisor' will be used. This may be shortened to 'supervisor'.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Researcher's Background**

### **1.1 Introduction**

I have demonstrated considerable professional and personal commitment to completing this research. As the researcher I am therefore a significant factor in the research. In this chapter my background will be outlined. I will explain what is meant by 'lunchtime story'. I will share my own story about lunchtime and detail my expectations of the research. I will also explore how my background and lunchtime story has shaped the research methodology and implementation.

### **1.2 Background to the Researcher's Interest**

This research is about lunchtime supervisors at one primary school having an opportunity to share, through conversation, their story about lunchtime at school. Although the idea seems simple, this research study has evolved through a process of synergistic development that has involved critical reflection, practice and knowledge construction over many years.

Employed by a Local Authority as an Educational Psychologist, part of my work in supporting schools has often involved whole school collaborative work with both primary and secondary schools to improve the lunchtime experiences of children. This work has included a number of diverse activities such as exploring children's views, strategies for teaching children playground games, developing play and outside policies and training with school staff on managing lunchtimes.

A significant focus of the work that I have undertaken as an Educational Psychologist has been on the role of the lunchtime supervisor. In doing this I developed a subjective feeling that the views of supervisors have the potential to influence what happens at lunchtime.

I have tentatively explored supervisor views but this has usually formed a part of other work with supervisors, rather than being the primary focus. I am therefore still unsure as to what their story of lunchtime is.

### **1.3 Explanation of the term 'Lunchtime Story'**

This study is about discovering the lunchtime supervisors' *story of lunchtime*. In using this phrase I am deliberately trying to convey a sense of complexity to the supervisors' psychological world and the meaning the lunchtime has for them. The study aims to investigate more than 'views' because this could, potentially, be limited to opinions and beliefs about lunchtimes. In conducting this study I hope to explore the supervisors' views but in addition I also aim to learn something about the supervisors' feelings. Further, I hope to explore their perceptions; what influences or shapes their views and feelings; what inferences they make and how they appear to interpret lunchtime situations. I may also discover contradictions and challenges. Moreover I aim to do this by talking with a group of supervisors so it will be their *collective* perceptions that I will be exploring. Through a group interview I aim to gain an insight into how they together construct the lunchtime reality. I hope that what I am able to facilitate is the telling of an interesting and in-depth collectively generated story of lunchtime.

## **1.4 The Researcher's Lunchtime Story**

Whilst this research is about the story that supervisors may tell, it is important to acknowledge from the outset that I have my own story about lunchtimes and in particular about lunchtime supervisors.

My story is underpinned by considerable respect for lunchtime supervisors. They have a challenging role in school. Supervisors have also shared with me their enjoyment and satisfaction gained from their role in a school. Training that I have undertaken with lunchtime supervisors has been rewarding because I have found them appreciative of the opportunity for professional development.

As a part of such training I have invited supervisors to share their views about limited aspects of lunchtimes. This has included for instance exploring solutions to identified lunchtime issues. However such work has formed only a small part of a much wider brief when working with supervisors.

Based on my work with supervisors I have observed them to be comfortable with informal conversation about lunchtimes. I have also found supervisors would often reveal a wide array of views and attitudes about lunchtimes. I have come to believe therefore that in trying to discover what the lunchtime supervisors' story of lunchtime is the best place to start would be with a conversation.

As indicated earlier I have considerable experience of working with schools and supervisors on lunchtimes. An element of my story about lunchtimes encompasses certain expectations of what the supervisors' lunchtime story may take account of. This includes for instance:

- Issues around convenience and familiarity.
- The challenging nature of the role.

- Some reticence in recognising the skills and experience that supervisors bring to the school lunchtime.
- A sense of enjoyment and satisfaction in the role of supervisor.
- Recognition that lunchtime provides children with an opportunity to play and socialise with other children.
- An appreciation that children learn social skills such as getting on with others, taking turns, sharing and table manners.
- A sense of responsibility to keep good order during lunchtime.
- The need to intervene to manage children's lunchtime behaviours.
- The dominance of football.
- The marginalisation of younger children, quiet children and girls. Bullying may be raised as a concern.
- Limited play opportunities and children being cold or bored.
- The nature of the different relationships that they have with children when compared to the relationships that teachers and parents have with them.
- Issues of respect demonstrated by children and parents towards supervisors.
- A perception of powerlessness within the school system. A feeling of being unsupported.

These points convey what I anticipate might be included in the supervisors' story of lunchtime but I do not really know. It will be interesting to compare my expectations with the outcomes of this research. It is also helpful to be aware of

personal expectations to avoid designing the research in such a way to simply confirm my pre-conceived views.

### **1.5 The Researcher's Views on Socio-cultural Factors and Methodology**

Thus far I have declared an interest in gaining some understanding of the supervisors' lunchtime story. I have shared my expectations of what that story might include.

I made a decision to limit research to the views of the supervisors. It is acknowledged that in doing this an insight into the views of others, particularly children, would be neglected. Furthermore it would not be possible to explore the interplay between the views of supervisors and children. Researching the views of others would potentially dilute the significance of the views of supervisors. I was particularly keen to value the views of supervisors per se. Manageability of the research study was a further consideration.

I do not work at the school and do not supervise at lunchtimes. As such I am not an 'insider' in the research context. I am perhaps a little more than an 'outsider' given my experience and familiarity with lunchtime issues. I am also able, to some extent, to invoke personal credentials which allow admission into the lunchtime context for the purpose of conducting research. These credentials would include, for example, my genuine interest, some empathy with supervisors and having an open and relaxed personality.

I have confirmed that I have been immersed in the field of school lunchtimes and work with lunchtime supervisors for many years. In this sense this study is akin to (but not wholly consistent with) practitioner research. There is a commitment to

exploring more about lunchtimes and going beyond some of the taken for granted features and seeing them in a new or different way.

The social constructionist model has been an underlying influence on this research. It is my understanding that activity always occurs within a system of social relations where we systematically construct an interpretation and understanding of the context. This is done by utilising the tools of our culture which include social conventions and language. As such a person's way of being, seeing and responding in the world is achieved by acquiring and applying knowledge and drawing on an interpretation within the specific context which includes awareness of possibilities within that context. Social constructionism steers away from the personal to focus on the social – how things can be understood given certain cultural and social relationships. The way a person constructs what they take to be reality is influenced and informed by social relationships. Angen (2000) affirms this view suggesting that there is no one universal reality for a social phenomenon, but rather 'multiple realities' that are contingent upon each individual's situation and context. *'From a social constructionist perspective there are no incontrovertible social truths'* (Macready, 1997, p131). Supervisors are situated in a unique context where children and adults are part of an interacting system. Within this system they construct their understanding, their reality, of lunchtime.

Although writing about learning, Edwards (2001) offers a socio-cultural explanation that I think is relevant to the complex lunchtime context and possibly how the supervisors' views may be shaped:

*'...a model of mind which is, primarily, but not entirely, a decoding, sense-making mind which engages with and is shaped by the world. It is an*



*interpreting mind, which ascribes meanings to events and objects. These ascriptions are mediated by a range of features. The most obvious forms of mediation are conversations, texts and joint action where learners' appropriations are easily evident. The less obvious forms of mediation include personal histories or previous interactions and the constraints and possibilities which are encoded in the social – historical expectations of particular settings and which allow particular ways of being in the world'.*

(Edwards, 2001, p 7).

Consistent with social constructionism it is my view that within the interacting system of the school it is the amalgamation of individual ideas, behaviours, conversations and stories that represent the playground society. Within the social context of lunchtime if play is conceived as a hiatus in the school's primary – educative – purpose, then lunchtimes may be marginalised and considered to be about 'behaviour management'.

Lunchtimes at school are situated within a wider school culture. This culture includes for instance an ethos about power relationships (perhaps based on gender, age, ability, perceived status) and issues of consensus (rules and routines, physical boundaries, adult presence and control). Within this culture there might be consensus as to physical boundaries, adult presence, communication protocols and the types of games that are permitted.

Expectations of children's play and behaviour and organisational issues might also evolve through consensus. However, the surface consensus could belie underlying conflicts which arise from children seeking to pursue their own agenda, their 'hidden curriculum', and adults holding individual or group views on lunchtime issues. Children and supervisors are interacting and integral features

of lunchtime and the meaning of lunchtime, or the perceived reality of lunchtime, is jointly created and negotiated, possibly through nuances of language, behaviour, response, assumptions, expectations and body language.

Within this the reality of lunchtime might be shaped by the supervisors own personal motivation and their understanding of their role and the value of lunchtime. It may be for instance that supervisors are concerned with the personal convenience of the role, ensuring a smooth dining routine and dealing with problems, rather than facilitating positive social interactions. If children actively discover such agendas then this may modify their lunchtime behaviours. Also, if, for example, liaison between supervisors and teachers has a tendency to focus on problems, there is the potential for an ethos to develop that lunchtimes are a concern.

Using a socio-culture perspective to understand space within school permits an understanding of the power of space. Within the interacting lunchtime system perceptions on the ownership of space and the way that space is managed may convey messages and meanings to children, which influence their attitudes and behaviour in a variety of ways. The critical idea behind this is that space makes a difference. The playground space is a very distinctive space where childhood culture and power relationships are played out. Playground space is very often the place where social hierarchies are still determined as individuals and groups use space to exert or express dominance – supervisors over children, boys over girls, older children over younger children. The supervisors can assert their authority through, for example, their control over movement and queuing during the lunch period, the noise level permitted in the dining hall, designating areas of the playground for certain games and dictating rules about being allowed back inside of school. The view that children have of their environment is in large part

determined by the way in which the adults responsible for the children view and use the same environment. The arrangement of space can have consequences for supervisors' ability to effectively and efficiently manage the lunchtime.

Within the context of school a socio-culture perspective also helps to understand the management of lunchtimes. The management of lunchtimes may be inconsistent and reactive and within the school culture lines of responsibility may be blurred. It often isn't clear who has independent authority at lunchtime and if supervisors would be expected to refer to teaching staff when there is a difficulty. Within schools there appears to be a hierarchical structure. It is unusual for lunchtime supervisors, teachers, parents and children to consider ideas and concepts together. Lunchtime supervisors may not perceive, or be perceived to have, significant status within the organisation of the school. Children may experience their teachers as the powerful adults in school, who have within their control, the incentives, sanctions and resources. Conversely, they may view supervisors as adults with a low profile in the school, with limited power and limited resources.

The purpose of the research will therefore be to provide an opportunity for supervisors to share their experiences and views about lunchtime. They will be given opportunity to share their meanings about lunchtimes which they may have generated through conversations, actions, previous interactions and the constraints and possibilities afforded through the school system.

I consider it apposite that the theoretical orientation of this research study should be phenomenological, that is, aiming to find key themes in what supervisors say about their experiences of lunchtimes. Alongside this I will endeavour to adopt an interpretative stance. I will undertake to make sense of the themes in a way that

says something about the nature of supervisors' experiences. This will involve my perspective. The research will not be about producing objective statements about what supervisors think about lunchtimes. It will not examine the supervisors' views in terms of pre-existing conceptual or scientific criteria.

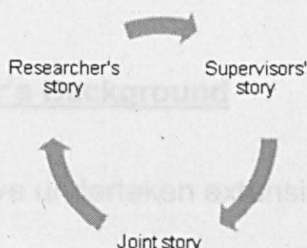
The decision about which research methods to adopt was influenced to some extent by the view of Banister, et al., (1998), who argues reducing material to manageable proportions and abstracting certain types of information from it is fraught with difficulties that might take little or no account of the context.

Research should be part of a debate and not a fixed truth. This stance is well positioned with work on lunchtimes which is a unique context where children and adults are part of an interacting system.

Further, Eisner (1998) says that qualitative experience depends on qualitative forms of inquiry. Qualitative inquiry is not just about what we see out there, but how it feels. This embraces the underpinnings of this research in terms of trying to discover how lunchtimes feel to supervisors. It is concerned with accessing their story. The research is not about a particular theory of lunchtimes or supervision at lunchtimes. It is an exploratory study that hopes to arrive at a better understanding of the views of supervisors.

Earlier I explained that I have my own views about lunchtime which have evolved from my experiences. These views have shaped the lunchtime story that I have created. Through this research I hope to discover the supervisors' own story. I hope to be able to construct a joint story. This process is represented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Creating a joint story of lunchtime**



To discover the supervisors' lunchtime story the methods used will seek to have some coherence with my belief that supervisors should be collaborative partners. Supervisors often bemoan their low status in school and lack of respect and it was paramount that this research did not reinforce this negative view. In some ways the research has a dual function – to research supervisors' views but also to do so in a way that promotes their status, confidence and skills. To have conducted research in any other way would have meant compromising on partnership work that I have promoted with supervisors.

Crucially at the heart of this study is the belief that the best way to find out about something is to ask. I considered it important to identify a research approach that supervisors would be confident with. I also strived for an approach which maintained as much continuity as possible with their ongoing life in school. I thought this would involve an opportunity to talk together in a relaxed and open manner. In essence this would mean supervisors sitting together to talk.

Doing this together was considered to be important in this research. Supervisors work together and share the tasks and responsibilities but they will have different views about lunchtime. Therefore research with supervisors should rightly be collaborative as this reflects their everyday practice. Collaboration involves

people working together to explore their different versions of a situation (Lasker, et al., 2001).

## **1.6 Summary of Researcher's Background**

Over a prolonged period I have undertaken extensive work on lunchtimes in schools. This experience has to a limited extent informed my views about lunchtimes. I have formed the impression that supervisors' attitudes may shape lunchtimes in school. Based on my experiences I have constructed a personal lunchtime story which includes some expectations of the likely features within the supervisors' own lunchtime story. Much of this is supposition as I have not specifically explored supervisors' views in depth.

Hence I considered that research which engaged more purposefully with supervisors to try to gain some insight and understanding of their views would be useful. I would like to discover the supervisors' story of lunchtime.

I am committed to collaborative working with supervisors and am keen to demonstrate respect for their role. My intention would be to conduct research in a way that has some coherency with their work and life experiences. Therefore a group conversation is considered to be justified.

Fundamentally this intends to be a rich, qualitative study that, akin to a piece of artwork, provides an opportunity for the viewer to begin to stand back, see the many layers of paint and colour, to question, infer, interpret, understand and enjoy.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of the Background Literature**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores previous research that has been conducted looking at lunchtimes in schools. It will explain that the available research does not give adequate attention to the role and views of lunchtime supervisors. I hope to make a case for a study that explores the supervisors' lunchtime story which will supplement and enrich previous research.

The review of the background literature has been divided into the following broad areas.

- **2.2** This briefly outlines what constitutes play and what children learn through play. Lack of play opportunities for children is discussed with the school lunchtime presented as a unique play opportunity.
- **2.3** The review of the background literature moves on to explore how lunchtime supervisors have a significant role in facilitating children's lunchtime experiences. Concerns about children's lunchtime behaviour are raised. In the background literature it is suggested that improvements at lunchtimes could be informed by the views of children, parents and school staff.

- **2.4** An overview is provided of the research into the different views of children, parents, teachers and lunchtime supervisors. The lack of research into the views of supervisors is highlighted.
- **2.5** The review of the background literature reveals that supervisors are a significant component of a complex interacting lunchtime context. Within this context the lunchtime reality will be constructed through a fusion of the different views and lunchtime objectives of children, teachers, parents and supervisors. To develop an understanding of how lunchtime is constructed it is advocated that it would be particularly helpful to gain some insight into the views of supervisors.

## **2.2 The Value of Play at Lunchtime**

To justify why it would be useful to explore supervisors' views lunchtimes need to be understood in the wider context of children's play. Importantly the child's right to play is recognised in Article 31 of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (1998).

'Getting serious about play', a review of children's play commissioned in 2004 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) takes a thorough look at play provision in the UK. The findings of this report informed the Government's decision to launch the Children's Play initiative with the Big Lottery Fund. This considers that play is what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas, in their own way and for their own reasons. This understanding of play shares a number of common characteristics of what play is commonly understood to be. This understanding was detailed in a review of perspectives on play, policy and practice carried out by Lester and Russell (2008) who detail that play is:



- Based on a sense of free-will and control, either individually or within the group.
- Motivated for its own sake rather than any external reward.
- Pleasurable and positively valued.
- Flexible and adaptive, using objects and rules in a variety of changing ways.
- Non-literal, 'as if' behaviour – it can rearrange or turn the world upside down.
- Unpredictable, spontaneous, innovative and creative.

Throughout the literature there is recognition that play is an important aspect of children's education experience, in the broad sense.

*'Important psychological needs can be satisfied within informal and loosely supervised opportunities for play and social interaction'. (Roderick, et al., 1997, p57).*

It is through play that children develop a knowledge and understanding that helps them to begin to conceptualise the world through natural investigations and creative engagements (Broadhead, 2008). Through freely chosen play activities children learn some of the skills necessary for adult life. These skills include social competence (for example cooperation, taking turns, forming attitudes and understanding rules), problem solving, creative thinking, and safety skills. Play isn't simply about children's developmental progression into adulthood, important too are the physical, social, cultural and emotional worlds that children both inhabit and create in their daily lives. Play experiences are about a good childhood today but also preparation for adulthood tomorrow (Sluckin, 1981). When they play children begin to develop a sense of self and a capacity to relate

to others. Play can help build resilience through its contribution to emotion regulation, building strong attachments and peer friendships, engendering positive feelings and enabling children to cope with stressful situations through developing creative approaches and problem-solving skills (Lester and Russell, 2008).

The Schools for the Future document on designing school grounds (DFES, 2006) provides information and guidance to inspire playground designs. The guide advocates that well designed playgrounds will contribute to children's emotional well being. Following on from the Government's commitment to recognise the rights of a child to relax and play as stated in the UN Convention, the draft national play strategy 'Fair Play' (DCFS 2008) was published. It involves much-welcomed initiatives that recognize that play is fundamental to children's enjoyment of their everyday lives and consistent with the five outcomes of Every Child Matters (2003). The Government's Fair Play policy emphasizes the importance of play in all environments. The policy mentions schools although it does not affirm allocation of funding to schools to promote play opportunities.

Some of the characteristics of play mentioned earlier (such as the sense of free-will and being non-literal) can of course be experienced in many places. Play happens everywhere children are – on the pavement, in a waiting room or a shop. There is concern however that children's habitats have shrunk and opportunities for children to interact with their peers are less than they were some years ago. Fewer children now play outside their homes or walk to school (Hillman, 1993; Thompson, et al., 1997).

The background literature review has highlighted that children's development is enhanced through play. The lack of play opportunities is therefore a concern. It is

fortunate however that children have opportunity to play during their lunchtime at school. During the school day children can spend up to a quarter of their time in school on the playground (Imich and Jefferies, 1994; Blatchford and Sumpner, 1998). It is vital therefore that the experiences children have at lunchtime are as positive, enriching and supportive as they can be. In talking about the school playground, Ota, et al. (1997) says it is:

*'...an environment where children are empowered to participate, create and develop in a unique and fundamental way' (p19).*

Lunchtimes are therefore unique and valuable play opportunities for children. However, what is known empirically about play at lunchtimes is quite limited (Pellegrini, 1991; Pellegrini and Bjorklund, 1996). Research that has looked into this has tended to focus on describing games children play or on the problems associated with disruptive and antisocial behaviour (Evans, 1996). Further, Blatchford and Sharp (1994) say that play at school has been largely taken for granted. Within the literature common themes emerge as to the potential benefits to children having opportunity to play at lunchtime (Docking, 1988; Smith, 1994; Pellegrini and Bjorklund, 1996; Blatchford and Majors, 1998). The potential benefits of play at lunchtime that have been identified include:

- Children's enjoyment;
- A forum for physical activity;
- The development of play, games, and children's culture;
- A forum for social development (for instance social skills, friendships, management of conflict);

- Educational implications in terms of readiness for learning (following a physical and mental break);
- The development of a range of language and cognitive skills during play.

The importance and purpose of play is highlighted in the National Initiative on Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL, 2003). The SEAL approach examines the contribution that well-managed playtimes and lunchtimes can make to children's social, emotional and behavioural development. The initiative offers guidance to put playtimes and lunchtimes into the context of a whole-school behaviour policy. It advocates congruence between what happens at playtimes and lunchtimes and what happens at other times of day. Further, SEAL highlights the need for staff development and encouragement for children to take responsibility for the playground and lunchtime cultures.

Research has been undertaken into these potential benefits of play at lunchtime, notably children's enjoyment, social development and the links with learning.

With reference to the existing research I will now elaborate on these three areas.

### 2.2.1 Children's Enjoyment

Research into children's views suggests that they enjoy lunchtime. They view this as a carefree time in their school day (Tizard, et al., 1988; Blatchford, 1998). Lunchtimes can be inherently motivating and enjoyable (Blatchford, et al., 2003). Conversely, lunchtimes can also be a time of misery for some children who may experience boredom, restricted opportunities, bullying, name-calling, teasing and social isolation (Tizard, et al., 1988; Blatchford, 1989; Mooney, et al., 1991; Whitney and Smith, 1993; Pellegrini and Smith 1993; Kelly, 1994; Smith, 1994).

Lunchtimes can therefore be a time of joy or of dread for some children. What happens at lunchtime can strongly affect a child's school experience (Thompson, et al., 1997).

### 2.2.2 Social Development

Another of the potential benefits of lunchtime is the forum for social development. It is suggested that lunchtimes have an important role in children's adjustment to school and social life (Sluckin, 1981; Sutton-Smith, 1982; Smith, 1982; Hartup, 1983; Ota, et al., 1987; Pellegrini, 1991; Pellegrini and Smith, 1993; Smith, 1994; Pellegrini, 1995; Pellegrini and Bjorklund, 1996; Thompson, et al., 1997; Reed and Roth, 2001; Blatchford and Pellegrini, 2002; Goodwin, et al., 2002; Blatchford, et al., 2003; Pellegrini et al., 2004). Within such research it is suggested that lunchtimes are particularly important in helping children to adjust to the present and prepare for the future, within the unique social context of the playground (Ross and Ryan, 1994). Games, for instance, constitute arenas where opposition is expected and as such provide opportunities to test and realign social identities among peers (Goodwin, et al., 2002). Reed and Roth (2001) found that rough and tumble play was an important way in which boys developed and maintained friendships, using physical activity to express emotions. In Sluckin's (1981) view, the lunchtime social world is essentially similar to those that adults create and sustain in their worlds. It is through their experiences at lunchtime that children learn numerous specific skills and roles to participate in games and to solve social problems.

### 2.2.3 Learning

In addition to enjoyment and the development of social skills play at lunchtime is considered to be an opportunity for children to learn through their play. However,

Pellegrini and Bjorklund (1996) and Evans (2001) argue that the pressure to provide children with a solid grounding in numeracy and literacy means that other curriculum areas and lunchtime are pushed to the margins. This argument is further supported by Blatchford and Sumpner's survey (1998) which reported a trend towards reducing lunchtime. The dominant view, argues Evans (2001), is that lunchtime is simply a break between the real purposes of schooling.

However other research suggests that having a break from work might have some immediate impact on children's learning when back in the classroom.

Pellegrini and Davis (1993) and Pellegrini and Bjorklund (1996) advocate that children learn better and more quickly when their efforts on a task are distributed (i.e. when they are given breaks between tasks). They also found that children's social interaction and physical activity at lunchtimes were positively, and significantly, related to their subsequent task attention. Speigal, (1999) argues that children can use their formal education experiences to inform their play. Children can also bring back into the classroom insights which teachers may not have had time to develop within the confines of the curriculum.

The existing research confirms that lunchtimes in school have a dual learning function – as an opportunity for children to learn through play but also as an opportunity to relax in readiness for the forthcoming lesson.

#### 2.2.4 Summary of the Value of Play at Lunchtime

Children have a right to play. The literature review has provided evidence of the many benefits of play so that children can enjoy their childhood and prepare for adulthood. It is as they play that children's cultural and emotional needs, their social skills, physical skills, learning and pleasure can be enhanced.

With changes in society, the school provides a unique context for children to play at lunchtime in a relatively safe environment.

### **2.3 Supervision at Lunchtime**

The literature review has thus far established that children have unique opportunities to play at lunchtime. The Head Teacher of a school usually has ultimate responsibility for the supervision of children at school during lunchtimes. Since the 1980's supervision at lunchtime has been delegated to ancillary staff (supervisors) employed specifically for lunchtime supervision.

Some Local Authorities have guidance on what might be included in the job specification for a lunchtime supervisor. Individual schools may tailor such guidance to suit their own needs. Job descriptions were reviewed from [careersadvice.direct.gov.uk](http://careersadvice.direct.gov.uk); [www.become-a.co.uk](http://www.become-a.co.uk) and a random selection of Local Authorities (for instance Nottinghamshire and Dudley). In reviewing the job descriptions there was a lack of clearly defined supervisor essential and desirable attributes.

However there were some common features that relate to the role of the supervisor. Many of these were broadly about practical issues directly related to the children eating and moving about the school during the lunchtime. There were a number of references to expectations that supervisors would deal with poor behaviour. Promoting good behaviour, positive social interaction and emotional support were only marginally referred to. Thus, there is significant emphasis on the practicalities of the lunch period. Furthermore, the overall impression gained is that supervisors should expect to have to intervene to manage poor behaviour. Arguably this encouragement to control children's

behaviour may run counter to the very essence of play, which is about a child's sense of free-will, being unpredictable, spontaneous and innovative.

Lunchtime supervisors are being given a clear steer that their primary role during the lunchtime is to ensure the good organization of practical matters and respond to poor behaviour. This is consistent with a concern raised by Sutton-Smith (1982; 1990) who asserted that children's play in schools is becoming increasingly domesticated and organised.

There is an interesting link here too with styles of parenting. Talking about supervision of children by parents, Furedi (2002) describes 'paranoid parenting' which holds safety and caution as intrinsic virtues. Paranoid parenting is driven by the constant expectation of harm to children. This is leading to a reduction of the quality and quantity of experiences available to children.

Even if supervisors were clear about the duties they were expected to perform and were skilled at this it is likely that supervision at lunchtime would be challenging. The Practitioner Group on School Behaviour and Discipline (2005), chaired by Sir Steer, identified that a school's set of values can be supported or undermined by the management of lunchtimes. Prior to this, the report from the Elton Committee of Enquiry into Discipline in Schools (DES, 1989) identified lunchtimes as the single biggest behaviour related problem that school staff face. The report went on to recommend that:

*'All LEAs and governing bodies which employ school staff should ensure that midday supervisors are given training in the management of pupil behaviour' (131.1).*



Despite the Elton report recommendation training opportunities for lunchtime supervisors are rather ad hoc. In a national survey to establish the nature and extent of provision for the training of lunchtime supervisors Sharp (1994) quoted 25% of the LEA's who responded as providing no training for supervisors.

Aside from training, White and Wilkinson (1986) advise that schools need to consider the key issue about the real purpose of the lunchtime. They propose that schools should consider the views of children, parents and school staff, including supervisors. Similarly, Docking (1988) points out that lunchtime problems such as racism, sexism, bullying and aggression can be combated, but only if there is concerted whole-school policy, involving all the adults, including lunchtime supervisors.

It seems that schools are becoming more aware of the need to address lunchtime issues and are adopting more deliberate policies with regard to lunchtime supervision (Blatchford and Sharp, 1994). The Primary National Strategy for Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (2003) has a module for schools specifically to address playtime and lunchtime issues. This includes emphasis on enhancing the self-esteem and skills of those who work with children at lunchtimes. The guidance argues that for the supervisors' role to be effective they need to be motivated and should receive appropriate professional development and support. Supervisory staff should feel valued, be effectively trained, well informed and able to work in partnership with other school staff.

Lunchtime supervisors have significant responsibility for children at lunchtimes. Potentially supervisors could have a crucial role in promoting children's lunchtime experiences. However, guidance on the expectations of supervisors has a focus on practical matters and behaviour management. The skills that a supervisor would be expected to bring to the role are not clear. Furthermore, the literature

review reveals that training opportunities are limited. There is now however increasing awareness, through initiatives such as SEAL, of the need to promote a more coherent, whole school approach towards the supervision of children at lunchtime.

## **2.4 Different Views on Lunchtime**

There were various reports in the background literature that suggested seeking the views of children, parents, teaching staff and lunchtime supervisors. It was argued that such views would inform improvements to lunchtimes. Returning to the background literature I reviewed research that had been conducted looking at views about lunchtime. As the main playground users, the obvious starting point would be to consider research that explored the views of children.

### **2.4.1 Views of Children**

Children might be viewed as the experts on life on the playground (Blatchford and Sharp, 1994) and various studies have considered children's views, often through interviews and questionnaires.

Tizard et al. (1988) found that lunchtimes were often perceived by young children as both the best and the worst side of school life. In another study Blatchford, et al. (1990) reported that the children particularly enjoyed the long lunch break. Children said that they enjoyed the opportunity to have a break from work, play games and meet with friends. Blatchford, et al. concluded that, '*...there can be little doubt therefore that for these children playtime was an enjoyable part of their school day - probably the most enjoyable part - and its importance should not be underestimated*' (p170).

Blatchford et al. went on to report the concerns of children about having to contend with boredom and disruptive behaviour such as bullying and teasing. Children expressed a preference for consultation about changes as they viewed the playground as 'their' domain. An interesting view on this is put forward by Sheat and Beer (1994) who suggest that whilst the idea of involving children in decisions about lunchtime has some merit, it might present some threat to adults in that participation requires a redistribution of power and reassessment of roles.

Findings similar to those reported by Blatchford, et al. were also reported by Evans (1996) investigating the views of children in Australian schools. In the study children were reported to say that the longer the break the better and that they preferred being given a choice about whether to go outside or remain inside, though they said they would generally choose to go outside. When invited to suggest changes they would like see, apart from lunchtime being longer, most of the ideas centred on space and equipment. Evans drew the conclusion that the similarities between findings in the Australian study and those of Blatchford, et al. (1990) in the English primary schools were quite striking, '*...which tells us something about how universal children's attitudes are when it comes to playtime. Children enjoy recess break for many of the same reasons*' (p56).

An interesting aspect to both studies is that the children do not shy away from expressing concern about anti-social behaviour and they are willing to offer suggestions for dealing with this. Rafferty (1997) reports of a case study at one school that was keen to give children a voice in decision making. Through analysis of questionnaires completed by children problems were identified around lunchtime. This included being bored, anti-social behaviour, poor physical conditions, sexist attitudes (for instance girls felt they weren't allowed on the football pitch) and the potential for accidents (for instance being hit by a ball).

Through the questionnaires the children offered suggestions for improvements such as having playground equipment, peer support to resolve issues, having somewhere to sit, equal use of all areas of the playground (for boys and girls) and directing younger children to play small equipment games away from other games.

That children are aware of but not deterred by anti-social behaviour conflicts a little with the problem view of play and lunchtimes espoused by some research. However, some research explicitly sets out to explore children's views of problem behaviour. In a study to establish children's views of playground problems to inform a prevention programme Leff et al. (2005) asked them to complete playground diaries. This identified primary concerns about rough and tumble play, low levels of cooperative behaviours, poor communication and limited game playing between children of different racial backgrounds.

In addition to evidence of children's enjoyment of play and lunchtimes and children's views on problems, other research has explored the nature of activities children choose to undertake during their breaks, for example in Blatchford's (1998) longitudinal study, children at the ages of 7, 11 and 16 years were interviewed to provide an integrated account and analysis of children's experiences and activities at break time. In another study, Blatchford et al. (2003) asked children to complete questionnaires about the type of games they enjoyed, when researching the social context of playground games. More recently Blatchford and Baines (2006) conducted a national large scale postal survey to provide current information on break times in schools. The results of this confirmed that children remain positive about lunchtimes. Children value the opportunity to do what they want, to socialise and to enjoy physical exercise. The

children commented on insufficient opportunities and space to have fun.

Behaviour at lunchtime was considered to have improved.

Aside from interviews and questionnaires, alternative research approaches include the work of White (1988) who gives an account of the way the playground experiences of children were discovered through an analysis of their writing and drawings. Adopting a different approach, Sheat and Beer (1994) provided children with a large map of the playground to record on it what happened where, which spaces were used least and most and what conflicts arose there. Further work involved children in a site walkabout where the children took visitors around and spoke about their playground experiences. Children also used disposable cameras to take photographs that best represented the way they viewed the school.

Other studies into children's views have similarly attempted to establish the various ways children spend their time on the playground, their likes and dislikes and the prevalence of problems and their causes (Brown and Burger, 1984; Titman, 1990; Titman, 1994; Briggs, et al., 1995; Rennie, 1996; Ross and Ryan, 1994; Mannion, 2003).

Ridgers et al. (2005) monitored the physical activity of over 500 children aged 5-11 years of age through observation. In addition over 50 detailed semi-structured interviews were conducted with children and school staff to examine their attitudes towards lunchtimes and to determine the types of activities children enjoy playing in the playground. The results suggested that children looked forward to lunchtime. Boys were found to engage more in physical activities whilst girls enjoyed more social sedentary activities. The dominance of football was highlighted by the girls. The study further observed that rough play and play

fighting were more prevalent when playground equipment was limited. This perhaps suggests that children might appreciate being offered a wider choice of lunchtime activities.

Working in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council's Play Service the Play in Schools Association conducted a survey into children's views (2009). This suggests that most children enjoy the play experiences offered by their schools, that they have good relationships with the supervisory staff and that being bullied is not a major issue amongst this sample. The results also suggest that there are a minority of children who do not enjoy playtimes, feel isolated and overlooked. An individual school, also in Nottingham, has recently (2010) reported the findings of an Extended Schools survey which gathered general views about school, including lunchtimes. However this survey was limited to involvement in and awareness of lunchtime activities.

A national study commissioned as part of a wider body of research to inform the 2009 'Play day' campaign highlighted the need for children to have time to play and enjoy themselves. The views of the children taking part in focus groups as part of this study established children's play patterns and specifically their time for play. These accounts support previous research into this area. School was valued as a place to play for the opportunity to socialise with different children and meet up with friends on a regular basis. It also emerged that the children valued the freedom to play without structure. Playing with others at school meant children could be inventive and spontaneous when playing. Children also highlighted a number of ways in which play assisted effective learning in the classroom. Most commonly, children spoke of how play boosts their concentration in class and how the chance to let off steam in the playground could lead to improved behaviour in the classroom.

Taking children's views a little further, Ota et al. (1997) wanted to explore the secret world of the child on the non-school playground. Conversations were held with children, exploring issues of place, and the sense of ownership, autonomy and power. Ota et al. argue that it is on the playground that children construct their personal view, their identity and their own unique story, away from the space that adults inhabit. This moves away from simple, face-value expressions of likes and dislikes, and seeks to explore children's core beliefs, as constructed away from adults.

However at school supervisors are nearby and arguably in control of the lunchtime. The suggestion that children's play might in some way be influenced by adults challenges the idea proposed earlier that play belongs to children. However any connection between the core beliefs of children and those of supervisors has not been meaningfully investigated. It is not known how children might construct their core beliefs, alongside, in partnership with or in opposition to, the core beliefs of the supervisors.

Thomson's 2005 study into the ownership of space is consistent with the idea that children's play might be influenced by adults. Ownership of space on the playground was explored through observation and semi-structured interviews with teachers, lunchtime supervisors and also with children. The children seemed aware of the physical playground boundaries but also the framework of rules, regulations and supervision which constrained the choices they could make during lunchtime. Consistent with this, Johnson (2005), reflecting on co-researching with children their perceptions of their place(s) in primary school, described how 83% of photographs taken by children to show places they liked in school were of outside places. Johnson reports that amongst children's

greatest needs were freedom to meet and ownership of spaces. Children want to own space, but supervisors may wish to be in control of space.

Much of the research into children's views provides descriptive accounts of the activities they enjoy at lunchtime. There are fewer accounts of children's perceptions of the role of play at lunchtime (Evans, 1996). Moreover in seeking the views of children the objectives should not be restricted to simply providing a descriptive account but should include a commitment to considering how their views might shape lunchtime improvements. Indeed Aston and Lambert's (2010) study on pupil participation in decision making suggests that children and young people feel that their views may only be partially heard and may not lead to change.

Individual schools often explore pupil views so that changes are informed by such views. Linked to the Every Child Matters (2003) agenda a school in Hampshire expresses a commitment to giving children a voice and encouraging their participation (2007). Through the School Council and using the SEAL (2003) materials children are encouraged to recognise their rights and to respect school culture. The school argue that this has changed the ethos of the school to a more participatory environment. Arrangements for lunchtimes have changed as a result of pupils' opinions being sought and acted upon.

Likewise the Leading Aspect Award Organisation (2008) cite a case study of a school in North Yorkshire which recognised that the unstructured lunchtime had a negative impact on the behaviour, social and emotional issues of the children which disrupted their afternoon learning. Consequently the views of children about lunchtime activities are regularly sought through questionnaires. Feedback from the School Council is regularly considered and evaluated. The children's



views inform practices at the school which have led to a more coordinated approach towards lunchtime arrangements and supervision that is monitored and evaluated. This has involved for instance the 'Lunchtime Play leader Project', using funding from the Extended School Development Fund. Lunchtime supervisors now form a key part of the school's management structure. Termly meetings, with a formal agenda, are held to address strengths, weaknesses, issues and further developments. The report of the case study states that as a result of such changes there has been a significant improvement in children's behaviour over the lunchtime period, with fewer incidents of inappropriate actions. The children are reported to enjoy the opportunities they have to play and learn together. They play co-operatively and show care and concern for each other. Parents report on the improvement in lunchtime provision. Furthermore improvements in lunchtime provision have impacted significantly on the way in which children approach learning in the afternoon, e.g. settling to work more quickly, more positive attitudes.

At another school in Lancashire annual Pupil Voice and Pupil Attitude surveys are analysed and presented to staff and Governors for action. Following the 2009 survey the School Council met with the school cook and senior lunchtime supervisor. The results of the discussion ensured the children were able to share their views about the type of food offered and the order in which children entered the dining hall. The School Council have set up a working party to find out the views of the children regarding equipment to use in the playground and new picnic tables have been ordered.

The background literature therefore contends that children perceive aspects of the lunchtime to be enjoyable. Equally there are some aspects that are disliked

by children. Increasingly children's views are being explored to inform changes and improvements to lunchtime arrangements.

#### 2.4.2 Views of Parents

There are fewer reports on parental views on lunchtimes. The review of the background literature into parents' views on lunchtime reveals that, particularly more recently, their views have been sought in relation to healthy eating rather than the purpose of lunchtime and supervision arrangements.

Various studies have been undertaken to explore parents' views about play. For instance, although not specifically about play at school, Clements (2004) reports findings that suggest parents are aware that children today spend considerably less time playing outdoors than they themselves did as children. Parents in the study suggested this was primarily due to an increased dependence on television and digital media and concerns about crime and safety. The survey results indicate that parents are aware of the positive impact that active, outdoor play has on their child's development.

Similarly parents' views have been sought about specific lunchtime issues. For instance parental views were explored as part of a research project conducted by Leeds Metropolitan University investigating why many children do not take their free school meal entitlement (2008). A link between free school meals and lunchtime behaviour was revealed as parents were concerned about the potential for bullying.

Research that has been more specifically about children's wider lunchtime experiences suggests concerns about lunchtime problems. Ross and Ryan (1994) interviewed parents and identified concerns about safety, girls being

marginalised and racism. This is consistent with concerns about lunchtime behaviour that has already been discussed in this literature review (for instance Blatchford, 1989; Kelly, 1994; Smith 1994).

Research that sets out to explore parents' views of problems on the playground limits what they might wish to say. It makes assumptions that this is what parents would be concerned with and, in a sense, creates a barrier to exploring more openly with parents. The focus on the difficulties that arise during lunchtime is perpetuating a view that such times present real difficulties and children are at risk. Perhaps such concerns about safety on the playground will be communicated in some way to the children and, in turn, impact on how they themselves view such issues. A child might, for instance, be more inclined to view a challenge about the rules of a game as intimidation, as opposed to an opportunity to engage in negotiation and compromise.

Research that involves parents, and others, in problematising lunchtimes takes no account of the suggestion from White and Wilkinson (1986) to explore the key issue about the purpose of lunchtimes. It is possible that parents would have a view on what play is, and what the potential benefits of play at lunchtime would be. They might have a view on how supervision should be undertaken. Parents may also be able to offer ideas on strategies for enhancing lunchtime experiences for children, and thoughts on how parents and the community could support school initiatives.

A review of the available literature confirms that many individual schools have actively sought parental views on lunchtime. A survey conducted in 2009 at a school in Lincolnshire asked for parent views on lunchtimes. The results suggested that parents felt children were generally happy at lunchtimes. Parents

expressed concern about bullying, aspects of lunchtime organisation and the available facilities. There was also some concern about the way that poor behaviour was managed. At another school in West Sussex a survey was conducted to gather parent views on wider school issues (2010). The results of this suggested parents held strong opinions on lunchtime arrangements and so the school plan to devise a dedicated lunchtime questionnaire for parents.

As with the children's views, although important, parental views do not form an explicit part of this research, though may be referred to. Of interest is that, although some research has called for whole school involvement in playground initiatives, and seeking the views of all involved, actual research into this is limited, particularly in relation to parents.

#### 2.4.3 Views of Teachers

There are some studies reported in the literature of the views of teachers some of which explicitly seek to discover teacher's views on the purpose of lunchtime.

Sluckin (1981) asked teachers and children what they thought lunchtime was for. Both groups gave similar responses about getting a break, fresh air and exercise. With prompting the teachers went on to concede that children would also have an opportunity to advance their social skills. Sluckin's work yields two other particularly interesting points. Firstly the teachers said they did not have a clear idea of just what the children did when by themselves. Teachers said children's lunchtime world was more or less closed to adults. Sluckin's work did not examine how such barriers are created or sustained. Secondly, a general abhorrence towards playground duty was expressed with some admitting to taking notice to what was happening only when there was a problem. The

teachers seemed not to have realised that adults can facilitate play, enjoyment and learning at lunchtime.

Other research on lunchtime interactions was conducted by Evans (1990) who described how children wanted to show or tell an adult something. Conversely adult initiated interactions were directive or punitive. Evans argues that this implies a lack of understanding of the crucial role lunchtime experiences have in children's development. The punitive and directive stance further demonstrates limited appreciation of the potentially enhancing role that adults could take.

Evans (2001) extends this argument further by suggesting that essentially teachers do not understand the value of play. Evans proposes the decline in permission to engage in rough and tumble games as an illustration of teachers' lack of understanding. There is a concern that such play may escalate into real fights or be used as a vehicle for bullying. Contrary to this view research by Pellegrini (1987) and Smith and Boulton (1990) suggests it is unusual for play fights to lead to real fights.

In summary, research that has looked into teacher's views on lunchtimes indicates that they are aware of the potential benefits of lunchtime experiences in children's development. Disconcertingly the research also implies a lack of understanding on the part of teachers for the role that they could have in ensuring children's lunchtime experiences are beneficial. Moreover, teachers have alluded to a children's lunchtime world that inexplicably excludes adults. This latter point is of particular significance in relation to this research study. It is not clear how the barrier that excludes adults is created. Perhaps there is something about the attitudes and subsequent behaviour of the supervising adults that helps to perpetuate an exclusive children's lunchtime world.

#### 2.4.4 Views of Lunchtime Supervisors

Given the possibility that the supervising adults may contribute to the creation of a children's lunchtime world it would be interesting to discover what the existing research literature claims to understand about supervisors' attitudes towards lunchtimes.

Fell (1994) concedes that differences in values between supervisors and teachers can be a source of conflict. Consistent with this view, Ross and Ryan (1994) say that a positive ethos regarding the lunchtime depends upon shared values, as well as clear procedures.

Blatchford and Sharp (1994) recognise that teachers' views about lunchtime behaviour is important but only partial, given that they are not responsible for lunchtime supervision. Blatchford (1989) had also suggested that a detailed study with supervisors was required. Some years later, Docking (1988) suggests teachers should, '*draw on the supervisor's unique experience and knowledge*' (p123). Similarly, White and Wilkinson (1986) had recognised the importance of having some focus on supervisor expectations and their role. Fell (1994) argues that work with supervisors should start with their needs and feelings, as the low self-esteem of supervisors would have some bearing on how they fulfilled their role.

It has therefore been asserted that the views of lunchtime supervisors should be sought yet surprisingly little is reported on supervisor views. Blatchford (1994) confirms research into supervisors' views has been neglected. When discussing supervision issues Blatchford and Sumpner (1998) explore the views of teaching staff, but do not involve supervisors. Similarly, in a study into children's views on playground games, Blatchford et al. (1998) invited children and teachers to

complete a questionnaire but did not include supervisors. Briggs, et al. (1995) call for, '*a whole school approach in conjunction with parents, pupils and all staff*' (p38), but fail to give specific mention to lunchtime supervisors.

Boulton (1996) also recognised that the attitudes of lunchtime supervisors have not generally been investigated. Boulton proposes that where people have a vested interest in a topic there is likely to be some harmony between their attitudes and their behaviours. This is consistent with my belief that the attitude of supervisors towards their role would influence the way that they supervise. In turn this may shape children's lunchtime experiences.

One study which did explore supervisor views was reported by Ross and Ryan (1994). This revealed their concerns over safety, the dominance of football, and children being excluded from groups. The interviews also disclosed supervisors' feelings of low- status. Furthermore, supervisors identified a need for clear rules and support from staff. Supervisors were reported to also say that they did not consider themselves to be educationalists. The potential implication of this is that the opportunity for children to learn through play at lunchtime may not be facilitated by supervisors.

Opportunity for exploring the views of supervisors might reasonably be provided through training courses. Sharp (1994) provides an overview of training opportunities for lunchtime supervisors but this indicates that the content of such courses does not explicitly address attitudes about lunchtimes.

Docking (1988) suggests that joint meetings between teachers and supervisors could help to identify shared opinions but limits this to solving problems, rather than exploring their core beliefs about lunchtimes. Docking goes on to summarise the difficulties for supervisors in terms of five 'lacks'. These are: lack

of status; lack of role clarity; lack of training; lack of communication and lack of information. Whilst Docking is probably not apportioning blame for these lacks to the supervisors, this does nonetheless create a deficit picture. There is no parallel summary of the personal qualities or skills that a supervisor might bring to lunchtime, nor the organisational systems that might promote positive lunchtime experiences.

In a later study into the management of lunchtimes at one school Imich and Jefferies (1989) observed supervisors. The report of the study comments on supervisors' lack of consistent management skills. To improve lunchtime at the school Imich and Jefferies arranged meetings between supervisors and teaching staff to facilitate the sharing of views, directly about the organisational features that could be adapted. The intention of the intervention was to manage problems, rather than explore core attitudes and beliefs.

There are a limited number of reports of the views of children, teachers and parents. Reports of supervisors' views are even fewer in number. Research into supervisors' views tends, on the whole, to be about identifying concerns.

Docking (1988) talked of supervisors' unique experience and knowledge about lunchtimes. Presumably this might well go beyond the identification and resolution of problems. Supervisors' distinctive lunchtime experiences might have made it possible for them to formulate ideas about a wide range of lunchtime issues. The literature that exists however does not offer insights into what supervisors think about lunchtimes or the role that they have.



## **2.5 Lunchtime as Co-constructed**

It is accepted that supervisors are an integral part of the school lunchtime. Earlier an account was given of a social constructivist perspective on lunchtime. This proposes that the lunchtime reality is constructed by how it can be understood given the cultural and social relationships specific to the school and lunchtime. It has been advocated that within this lunchtime reality supervisors' attitudes may be a factor in determining children's lunchtime experiences. There was also a tentative suggestion that children enjoy a lunchtime culture that is closed to adults.

Lunchtimes involve children and lunchtime supervisors. They share the space, they share the time. They perhaps have some shared understandings of what lunchtimes are about, and what is expected. Thus, whilst children may control their play they may do so within certain confines. Therefore in reviewing the background literature the shared nature of the lunchtime context and how the different cultures of children and supervising adults might conflict, complement or merge was explored.

Our everyday interactions can often be taken for granted and their significance may be overlooked. Children experience lunchtime every day. Lunchtime presents the promise of attaining personal and group identification. The lunchtime culture may comprise forces that include and exclude. This culture is in part derived from adult choices, in part by children's choices, and in part by the combination of such factors. There are the additional influences of the media, marketing and weather.

The restrictions on choices in play can be constructed by others. Children for example often engage in popular trends created by the media and marketing

(e.g. collecting Pokémon cards). A child's questions of 'What can I play today?' and 'Who can I be today?' are re-constructed by market forces. The questions are changed into: 'What *should* I play with today?'; 'Who *should* I be today?'.

Other factors that restrict choice are timing and duration, which have some bearing on children's enjoyment and play at lunchtime (Pellegrini and Smith, 1993).

The forces of weather can have a significant impact on a child's emotional state. A feeling of cold can create feelings of misery for instance. Physical discomfort affects physical performance. Children may interpret being outside, particularly in poor weather, as giving messages of power or unfairness.

Consistent with this, human experience is, I believe, constructed within specific social contexts and a collective sense is made, meanings negotiated and identities elaborated, through the process of social interaction between people. The quality of supervision provided and interactions between supervisors and children are important factors in children's behaviour. Certainly Brown and Burger (1984) had suggested that the children are in some way influenced by the attitudes of supervisors and moderate their use of the playground accordingly. For instance if supervisors are most concerned with ensuring a smooth dining routine rather than facilitating social interaction children may become more inclined to conform to routines and organisation rather than enjoying social lunchtime conversation.

Lucas (1994) observed that there has been extensive discussion about play in general and play and bullying, but rarely about play at school. Likewise discussion about the overall impact of staff views and school ethos on play behaviour has been limited. An intervention to reduce aggression in school

reported by Leff, et al. (2004) was underpinned by three factors, better playground design, more age and gender appropriate activities being made available and empowering supervisors to better guide children's play behaviour. It is apparent however that there is limited knowledge about the interactions that take place between supervisors and children (Blatchford, 1994). Blatchford and Sumpner's (1998) longitudinal study of children's views identified the influence of parents and family on, for example, children's attitudes to aggressive behaviours. Blatchford and Sumpner's report neglected to comment on whether supervisors would similarly affect children's views. In acknowledging the social influences on choices that children make at lunchtimes Blatchford et al. (2003) advocate for more careful exploration of influencing factors within the shared interacting lunchtime context.

Blatchford (1998) had observed that sociological and ethnographical research has tended to portray the relations between the two cultures of children and school as coexisting by virtue of collaboration between children and teachers. Pupils may not therefore like aspects of school but may collude with it to avoid conflict. Consistent with this:

*'The process by which children are socialised involves exposure to different adult worlds or different sets of taken for granted rules, which the children have to discover. They learn to behave appropriately with each other according to the rules of their own childhood culture, and they learn how to interact across cultures, according to varying sets of rules'.*

(Davies, 1982, p161)

The argument then is that children's play is to some extent governed by adult choices, in that there is some collaboration between children and adults. There

are unspoken rules, some of which relate to children and others which relate to the adult world. Children discover these different sets of rules to govern their own behaviours. Brown (1993) concedes that the absence of direct adult supervision does not mean that children operate without constraint. He proposes instead that there are many interacting factors which influence children's behaviour. Play behaviour is a function of the relationship between the play environment and the playing child.

The idea of adults having some impact on children's behaviours does not sit comfortably with notions as to what play is. Such notions centre on freedom with minimal adult interference. Ota et al. (1997) say play is a time when the child is in control and able to develop ideas away from the influence of adults. They say there are issues about place, relationships and secrecy. They claim rules are made and sustained by children. Further it is through play that emerging characteristics of freedom and autonomy develop. This is without the influence of the adult. Ota et al. describe this as a 'hidden curriculum'. Similarly, Davies (1982) declares that there is much that goes on between children that adults often do not know about. She says that the adult world is quite separate to the child world. Davies asserts that children interpret the world slightly differently from adults because they view it in their own terms; often referred to as the 'culture of childhood'. Children develop a shared understanding between themselves, which will include knowledge about games and a repertoire of the acceptable behaviours and rules (Brown, 1993). Children spend time with other children and will formulate workable solutions based on similar perspectives that may be incommensurate with parent, teacher and supervisor perspectives. Davies professes that adults are only called into the world of the child when things become unmanageable. But Davies also goes on to discuss the extent of

the unquestionable power that adults have over children, which can impede children's agency.

So on the one hand there is the idea of a 'hidden curriculum' to children's play that is free from adult interference but on the other hand there is the implication of some overlay of adult power. Furthermore, the idea of freedom in play and separateness from adults is perhaps a little too simplified. Children's play is not detached from what adults think, say and do. Davies (1982) embarked on a project to ask children about how the world looked to them. Children claimed to actively discover the interactional rules relevant to individual teachers. Alongside the teacher's agenda, the children pursued their own agendas, which related specifically to the culture of childhood (for instance having fun and interacting with each other). The children wanted adults to allow them sufficient freedom to pursue their own agendas. They also wanted adults to somehow communicate the rules to them. Davies was of the opinion children realised that, at school, 'success' is based on capacity to cue into what the adults want. Children's culture therefore exists in parallel with, and complementary to, adult culture.

If children are able to discover the teacher's agenda arguably it would be feasible for them to ascertain the supervisors' agenda also.

Children's perceptions of supervisors were explored in studies reported by Imich and Jefferies (1989; 1994). Observations of supervisors were also carried out. Children perceived supervisors in different ways as 'naggers', 'unfair' or 'soft'. Conversely the supervisors reported that they faced insolence and rudeness. This illustrates differences between the adult and child agendas and their perceptions of the same situation.

Davies (1993) also talks about two attributes which she says are essential to identify: autonomy and agency. To achieve full human status children must achieve a sense of themselves as individuals with agency. Children must have the confidence to make choices about what they do. They must accept responsibility for these choices. The choices they make must be rational i.e. within the range of possibilities understood by the group. Thus if the adults are in some way creating the rules as to what that range of possibilities might be then they are impacting on the choices that the children make during lunchtimes. Adult interference may obstruct children's autonomy and agency.

Further, Davies talks of the process of shaping the individual that is undertaken by others. Each person actively takes up the discourses through which they and others speak the world into existence as if they were their own. For example, 'Be a good boy now and play nicely'. The child may make connections between 'boyiness', 'goodness' and 'niceness'. In being asked to be good and nice, the implication is that the child isn't. Thus between them the adult and the child have constructed a reality that 'good boys play nicely', and he isn't one of the good boys.

Through the review of the relevant background literature it is emerging that children may have some insights into supervisors' lunchtime agenda. Children may also be capable of pursuing their own agenda within this. It is possible too that together children and supervisors are responsible for shaping both individual identities and perceptions of lunchtimes more generally. For instance, a supervisor's agenda could be about personal convenience. As such the supervisor could have limited interest in developing children's social skills for example. The children may possibly therefore become unconcerned about their own social behaviour around that supervisor. Alternatively if the supervisor

agenda is about being 'helpful' the children might go on to develop a belief that 'helping' is a valued skill, which earns adult approval.

Children and supervisors jointly generate an understanding of the lunchtime reality. We all have our own stories to tell, to ourselves and others and it is through the language that we use in our stories that:

*'...what we say and the way in which we represent things to ourselves and to each other, will serve to maintain a status quo, or to bring about some change'. (Macready, 1997, p131).*

It is the stories that supervisors tell, using their own scripts, which would create, sustain or change the lunchtime culture. Children, parents and other school staff would all have their own lunchtime stories in addition. Supervisors are situated in the framework of a school. The lunchtime is a context shared by all those who are part of the school. This presents a complex interacting system within which the different stories are likely to have some consistencies, differences and possibly even some direct conflict.

Various studies have suggested that there are factors which directly influence how children make use of the time that they have on the playground. Boulton (1996) suggests that supervisors' attitudes towards playful fighting determines their actual behaviour towards children engaged in play fighting. Blatchford, Creeser and Mooney (1990) pose a question about *allowing* the creation of a confrontational moral code at lunchtime. This code may run counter to the spirit of co-operation and tolerance many teachers strive to encourage in the classroom. In using the word *allowing* Blatchford, et al. is implying that it is adults who in some way bestow 'permission' for children to behave aggressively.

Commenting on learning generally, Rudduck and Flutter (2000) identify the necessary conditions of regimes, organisations, relationships, respect, fairness, authority and support to develop a sense of self as a learner. In terms of the children reading the supervisors' agenda it is important to consider how supervisors' views might promote or conversely set up barriers to such conditions for learning.

Obviously the views and the agendas of lunchtime supervisors would not be the sole influencing factor on children's lunchtime experiences. However, as Sharp (1994) confirms, supervisors are a part of an interacting system. This system reflects the collective attitudes and values of the school, the community and the wider social and political context. The attitude of supervisors should therefore to be considered in context. Supervisors are situated in a school framework of lunchtimes being about supervision, managing behaviour and the efficient organisation of lunch. This is systematically built into and spoken about through everyday routines and the structure of school life.

The background literature is therefore suggesting that supervisors are part of a complex interacting system. Within the shared lunchtime context experience is constructed and a collective sense of the lunchtime culture is developed.

Children's lunchtime culture exists in parallel with adult culture. Different child and supervisor agendas will be followed to perpetuate these cultures. There may be some consensus, consistency and conflict between these agendas. It is conceivable that the supervisors' agenda will have some impression on children's lunchtime experiences. The background literature however provides very limited information as to what those supervisor agendas might be and how they are conceived.



## **2.6 Summary of the Review of the Background Literature**

This research study is about exploring the collective lunchtime story of a group of supervisors. This chapter has presented the background literature relevant to this research study. This has included the value of lunchtime play opportunities.

Supervision arrangements and lunchtime difficulties have been outlined. Some of the existing research into lunchtimes (Docking, 1988 and Blatchford, 1989, for instance) suggests that the views of everybody involved in school lunchtimes should be sought to inform lunchtime improvements. Therefore research into the views of children, parents, teachers and supervisors was reviewed. It transpired that such research is generally limited. Particularly restricted was research into the views of lunchtime supervisors. It emerged that the lunchtime context is shared and that potentially supervising adults might influence children's lunchtime play. To summarise:

- Opportunities to play at lunchtime have the potential to benefit children's physical skills, their social development and their readiness for learning. Children also learn through play. Play is both about enjoying childhood today, and preparation for the future.
- Children's experiences at play and lunchtimes are sometimes positive, challenging or distressing.
- Research that has considered lunchtime issues has had significant focus on problems.
- Working together, at a whole school level, might be a good way to improve children's experiences at lunchtime.

- As a part of this, seeking the views of each group of individuals would be helpful. Crucially, this should include lunchtime supervisors.
- Research into the views of children, parents and teachers is limited. Research into the views of lunchtime supervisors is particularly restricted, despite appreciation that they have unique experiences and knowledge.
- Within an interacting system, children and supervisors share the lunchtime context. They each have agendas to follow and stories to tell. The story of one may shape the story of another. The different stories together construct an understanding about lunchtime.

This literature review has provided a compelling argument for the need for research that aims to explore the views of lunchtime supervisors to enhance understanding of their lunchtime story.

The next chapter will set out the aim of the research. It will also outline the research methodology which will be used.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methods, Methodological Rationale and Research Issues**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter is sub-divided into sections:

- **3.2** Aim of the research study.
- **3.3** Provides an outline of the methods that I propose to adopt to conduct research to explore the views of lunchtime supervisors.
- **3.4** An explanation will be given of the underlying methodological rationale.
- **3.5** Significant research issues will be considered.
- **3.6** The ethical issues relevant to this research will be explored.
- **3.7** To situate the researcher in the research process reflexivity will be explained.

#### **3.2 Aim of the research**

In Chapter 1 I described the background to my interest in the area of lunchtimes generally and supervisors' views in particular. Chapter 2 considered some of the existing literature that is relevant. In both chapters I have stated that the present research study is interested in exploring lunchtime supervisors' story of lunchtime. It is now appropriate to clarify the aim and scope of the study more precisely.

The aim of the research is to offer a unique insight into the lunchtime story of a group of lunchtime supervisors. This will be achieved primarily through semi-structured group interviews with one group of supervisors from one primary school to discover their collective lunchtime story. An understanding of their lunchtime story will be accomplished by way of analysis. Through an analysis of the interviews I hope to be able to understand and interpret the themes within that story. I will consider the results of the analysis alongside my personal lunchtime story and the existing literature.

The methods that will be adopted will now be outlined followed by the rationale for the methodology.

### **3.3 Methods of Inquiry Adopted**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

The aim of this research is to discover supervisors' lunchtime story. To explore this research will be undertaken as a case study. Supervisors from one primary school will be interviewed as a group. An observation will also be conducted at lunchtime to promote a shared understanding of the lunchtime context. In this section I will justify these methods.

#### **3.3.2 Case Study**

The research is not concerned with offering a numerical account of for example, the frequency of expressed views or a frequency count of themes. Lunchtime supervisors are situated in the framework of a school. This context is shared by all those who are a part of that school. Supervisors are a part of a complex interacting lunchtime system.

This study is a 'real-world' small-scale investigation that brings the research to life. It recognises the complexity of the situation under scrutiny. It is what Edwards and Talbot (1994) refer to as inductive - reflecting a tentative approach to theory and openness to the data that is gathered. Therefore, if the aim is to explore the supervisors' story, it will be important to do so whilst taking account of the context and the interactions that take place within it. To do this, research would need to focus on one context, i.e. one school. The case study may raise questions about significance, but in discussing statistical significance, Robson (2002), suggests that small numbers can still be valid. Moreover, the aim is to seek data that provide a '*well-grounded, rich description and explanation of processes occurring in local contexts*' (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p15). This research seeks to achieve a rich description of the lunchtime context from the supervisors' perspective. The research is not about comparing the stories of different groups of supervisors. It is concerned with appreciating the story that one group of supervisors may choose to share.

Further, Cohen and Manion (2000) recognise the strength of a case study, arguing that it can be strong in reality. Further, the case study provides an opportunity to probe deeply, to capture and portray the world as it appears to those in it. Relevant to this research, the case study reflects the complexity of the lunchtime culture and permits an exploration of aspects of the understanding about lunchtimes that supervisors may have developed.

### **3.3.3 Focus Group Interviews**

To enable supervisors to share their lunchtime story various methods were considered.

A questionnaire was considered to be too impersonal. Rapport and relationships could not be developed. Using a questionnaire would also have excluded the possibility of probing views more deeply. The inability to gain collective views and for supervisors to challenge each other would have been an additional shortfall. Dey (1993) confirms that the snapshot survey does not readily provide an adequate basis for the interpretation and explanation of the interactions and interconnections that govern social actions. Thus a questionnaire would prohibit the opportunity to investigate the complex interactions that take place within the lunchtime context.

In her work, Davies (1989) takes account of the common sense knowledge we have of everyday life. Additionally, Mattingly (1991) asserts that talking is a natural activity. Based on my previous experiences I made an informed assumption that supervisors would feel comfortable talking about lunchtimes. Thus I considered that a method that required supervisors to talk about their daily experiences at lunchtime would be appropriate.

Bell (1993) and Robson (2002) suggest that the interview is particularly advantageous when opinions are sought as this allows for greater depth of exploration. An interview helps to identify values, preferences, attitudes and beliefs. Interview, as with other qualitative approaches, relies on participants being articulate with some ability to generate shared meanings with the researcher. Previous work with supervisors that I have undertaken confirmed that supervisors would be able to express their views.

Further, Ahmed (1999) says that sensitivity is required to avoid using research methods that might reinforce particular issues. In this case I wished to avoid methods that perpetuated the view that supervisors lacked skills, had low status and were powerless. Interviews are a useful method of inquiry for sensitive issues, exploring feelings and experiences. They can be flexible and regard the interviewee as a person in a special position 'to know'. This appealed as it would be an opportunity to demonstrate respect for the privileged position that supervisors hold at school.

Bell (1993) warns about the dangers of bias developing in an interviewer who becomes interested in seeking out evidence to support their preconceived notions. This was taken as a clear steer to facilitate supervisors to lead the direction of the interview. A semi-structured conversation avoids overly guiding the interview in a way that could close off new areas of discovery. The less formalised interview structure permits a reactive approach, involving conversation and interaction that is not quite natural (because it is a research interview) but may be akin to normal conversations that the group may have in their daily practice. This would be beneficial to the present study in terms of eliciting the supervisors' authentic individual and collective views.

Hence a semi-structured interview was considered to be the most appropriate method to elicit the supervisors' story. The intention of the interview was create a normal conversation in such a way as to allow the supervisors to talk candidly about their views and feelings on the subject of lunchtimes to enable them to share their collective story. It was hoped that the interview would be sensitive to issues of power and status between the supervisors and researcher.

Story telling is a natural way we represent our experiences (Mattingly, 1991).

Different people will tell different stories about the same situation. This research was conducted at one school and supervisors were interviewed as a group. My experience of group interviews suggests they encourage a sense of collaboration. As such the group interview would facilitate the telling of different stories about the same lunchtime situations because the supervisors work at the same school.

Focus groups can empower individuals and this sits comfortably with the intention to respect and enhance the skills and status of lunchtime supervisors. Focus groups are a 'contextual' method in that they avoid concentrating on the individual devoid of social context. This is in harmony with the underlying social constructionist orientation of this study. Furthermore focus groups are relatively non-hierarchical as the power shifts from the interviewer to the participants (Wilkinson, 1999).

Within the background literature there is debate about whether or not participants in a focus group should know each other. Pre-existing relationships may be prone to continuing patterns of behaviours and leadership in the group.

Conversely, unfamiliarity might encourage more honest and spontaneous expression of views. However, interviewing with individuals who know each other means they are able to relate to comments that are made, and may be more able to challenge one another (Rabiee, 2004).

A focus group provides direct evidence about similarities and differences in individual opinions and experiences but these will not be in detail. A strength of a focus group lies in the opportunity for access to the collective view. It is appreciated that in attempting to understand the supervisors' views as the



accumulation of the individual views this research could be criticised for reductionism (Watts and Ebutt, 1987). However, it is the interactions between supervisors and their individual differences and the similarities that create the story of the lunchtime culture.

Focus groups place a special value on the collective view rather than the aggregate view.

*'...the hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group'. (Morgan, 1997, p 2).*

Moreover the strength of focus groups is in the liveliness, complexity and unpredictability of the talk (Myers and Macnaghten, 1999).

Thus, the decision was taken to conduct a focus group interview, in that there was a reliance on the interaction within the group and this was considered to be an integral part of the research study.

The number of focus group participants generally suggested is from 6 to 8 (Rabiee, 2004). The number of supervisors in this research would be five as dictated by circumstances (five supervisors being employed by the school).

Prior experience of working with supervisors and information gathered during a preliminary study (which will be discussed later) suggested that one or two interviews would be sufficient to explore the supervisors' collective lunchtime story. For this study two interviews with the same group of supervisors were considered to be appropriate to ensure that supervisors had ample time to share their views and their story. It was also considered that a second interview would

permit further exploration of any specific issues that had been raised in the first interview.

The prime concern was for the supervisors to have a sense of ownership of the interview. Open-ended questions to explore different themes were prepared prior to interview but the intention was for supervisors to take control of the direction of the conversation. The interview questions were based on prior experience of working with supervisors and information gathered during the preliminary study.

### **3.3.4 Data Recording**

For ease of use, dependability and clarity of digital sound a Sony™ mini disk recorder was used for recording the interviews. This is unobtrusive and requires no further input after the initial set up. This allowed me to be an active listener during the interview (rather than referring to a checklist or coding scheme for instance). The interview discs were later transcribed. Transcribing the interviews took time but the disc recording retained supervisors' actual words.

### **3.3.5 Observation**

As with questionnaires, a reliance on observation would have made it difficult to establish rapport. Observation was considered to be potentially intrusive.

Observation was also considered to be insufficiently collaborative. Observation could have provided a description of my understanding of what happened during the lunchtime but this may not have been a construction shared by the supervisors. In addition a description of lunchtime events would not have elicited the views of the supervisors.

However an observation at lunchtime was undertaken. This enabled me to draw on direct evidence, gathered from a natural setting (Denscombe, 1998) to

promote an understanding of the lunchtime context in that particular school. Whilst observation would not directly access the views of supervisors it would provide a joint reference for the interview conversation.

Due to experience I am confident observing at lunchtime. Similarly I have confidence in the sensitive management of children during observation. It is accepted that as an observer my presence may well have altered the children's play and behaviour. Equally by observing the supervisors their behaviour may also have changed. To some extent this did not matter as it was not what supervisors did or did not do that was being researched. The purpose of the observation was to enrich my understanding of the lunchtime context. The lunchtime observation also permitted the generation of questions for the second interview that were individually tailored to that particular school and the supervisors. This would enhance the exploration of the supervisors' lunchtime story.

### **3.3.6 Preliminary study**

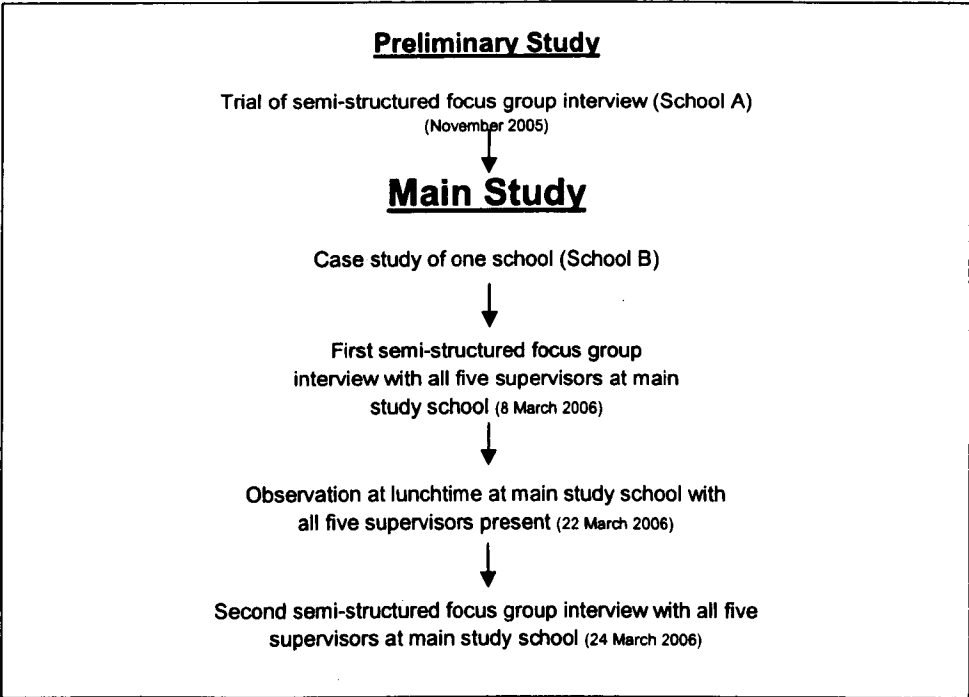
Having decided on the research design a preliminary study was undertaken at School A (the main study being carried out at School B). This preliminary study provided an opportunity to reflect on how a semi-structured focus group interview would facilitate supervisors in telling their lunchtime story. This study also provided an opportunity to rehearse a focus group interview. Data generated from the preliminary study was not used in the analysis of data gathered from the main study.

**3.3.7 Summary of Research Methods**

The study was completed at one school, with all five lunchtime supervisors. The primary means of data collection was two semi-structured supervisor focus group interviews. Following the first interview but prior to the second interview a lunchtime observation was conducted to enhance my understanding of the lunchtime context and to provide a shared reference. A preliminary study was undertaken at a different school to trial a focus group interview.

The research design is illustrated in the following figure (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Flow chart of the research methods**



### **3.4 Methodological Rationale**

#### **3.4.1 Introduction**

The preceding section detailed the methods that would be used to conduct the research to explore the supervisors' story of lunchtime. This part will detail the methodology that shaped the research. It will explain how Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) will accomplish the key aim of this research to explore the supervisors' story of lunchtime. Limitations of IPA will be also discussed.

#### **3.4.2 Methodological Rationale**

Based on my story about lunchtime and a review of the existing literature the idea gradually evolved that the research would be about discovering a lunchtime story as told by a group of supervisors. This would not be concerned with measurement and statistical analysis. The research will instead aim to explore, interpret and understand the supervisors' lunchtime story. The intention of the research is to articulate something in detail about the perceptions and understandings of supervisors.

This research is informed by the qualitative research paradigm, which is concerned with how the individual constructs reality and gives importance to the way people feel and experience their world. The underlying philosophy of qualitative research stems from the interpretative paradigm (Willig, 2001) in which the researcher becomes the main instrument for data collection. The researcher becomes immersed in the data and in the interpretation of participants' words. Qualitative research allows for a '*deeper understanding of social phenomena and their dynamics*'. (Attride-Stirling, 1993, cited in Teasdale,

et al., p385). It is an inductive approach (i.e. 'bottom up' rather than 'top down') and engages with a research question that is at an idiographic level. This research is phenomenological in that supervisors' 'lived in' experience is coupled with a subjective and reflective process in which inferences may be cautiously made. The intention is to develop a meaningful and adequate account of the view of supervisors.

Phenomenology, first put forward in 1936, originated with Husserl's attempts to construct a philosophical science of consciousness. Husserl rejected the view that empirical science is the basis for achieving an understanding of the world, stressing instead the importance of '*life world or lived experience*' (quoted in Fade, 2004, p647). It is a perspective that seeks to overcome the objective/subjective dualism. It draws attention to the ways in which our conscious relation to the world is neither subjective (of the mind) nor a simple consequence of objective reality. This is fundamentally the theoretical basis of this research which aims to explore the subjective views of supervisors, whilst taking account of aspects of objective reality as gathered during the observation at lunchtime.

Interpretative phenomenology is an approach to research that is informed by this philosophical stance. It studies the participant's perspectives of their world, attempts to qualitatively describe the content and structure of this, and explicate essential meanings.

### **3.4.3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

In trying to discover the supervisors' story analysis of the complex data gathered through the group interviews presents a challenge. The process of qualitative analysis aims to bring meaning to a situation rather than search for truth (Rabiee,

2004). This research is about exploring the supervisors' lunchtime experiences and views and the analysis will seek to extrapolate the essential meanings of these. The comments of the group, not the individual, must be the fundamental unit of analysis (Morgan, 1997). The reality of the whole must be considered alongside the context and its parts (Denscombe, 1998). This takes account of supervisors being a part of a complex interacting system. The interactions between the group of supervisors will generate the supervisors' collective lunchtime story.

Dey (1993) stresses that research data needs rigorous and logical procedures. Text from the less structured interviews may present difficulty in the analysis of the data. There will be many on the spot intuitive analytic decisions made during the interviews but analysis will not rely on impressions and intuitions. The analysis will be advanced through certain key features:

- Interpretation - by the researcher;
- Transparency - supported by examples from the data;
- Plausibility - it should make sense.

In this case, when analysing the interviews, the intention is to try to understand how supervisors make sense of their lunchtime experiences. Analysis needs to be about supervisors' perceptions or accounts of the lunchtime experience as opposed to attempting to produce an objective record of the lunchtime itself. Thus the research has a phenomenological facet. However, I appreciate that whilst trying to get close to supervisors' experiences it would not be possible to do this directly or completely. Access is dependent on my personal conceptions, which are required to make sense of supervisors' experiences, through a

process of interpretative activity. Also, the process of analysis should protect that rich account given during interview.

In exploring methodology, I reviewed grounded theory and discourse analysis but neither 'felt quite right'. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), founded by Jonathan Smith, however seemed to fit with my theoretical assumptions about how the supervisors would construct their understanding of their lunchtime experiences through their perception of certain cultural and social relationships. IPA does not intend to develop an inductively derived theory such as grounded theory. Moreover it does not set out to show how certain discourses are used to achieve particular effects in specific contexts as in discourse analysis. The interpretative philosophy holds that the nature of knowledge is subjective. Adopting an interpretive and phenomenological stance to the analysis of the data would give freedom to recognise and value my interpretation of the supervisors' experiences. Further I felt that IPA would enable me to take account of the supervisors' feelings and their perceptions of their skills and experiences. Moreover, I thought that IPA would permit me to consider these factors within the wider social context of lunchtime in school.

Phenomenological research characteristically starts with concrete descriptions of lived situations, often first-person accounts, using everyday language and avoiding abstract intellectual generalisations. The researcher proceeds by reflectively analysing these descriptions, perhaps ideographically at first, then by offering a synthesised account (for example, identifying general themes about the essence of the phenomenon). Importantly, the phenomenological researcher aims to go beyond surface or explicit meanings to read between the lines so as to access implicit dimensions and intuitions. This approach embraces our



embeddedness in the world of language and social relationships and values the process of interpretation.

Furthermore, an assumption of IPA is that it is not possible to gain direct access to a research participant's life world. The aim however is to explore experience from the participant's perspective, whilst recognising that such an exploration must implicate the researcher's own views of the world, as well as the nature of the interaction between the researcher and participant. Thus phenomenological analysis is always an interpretation of the participant's experience. IPA is a qualitative method of analysis with a phenomenological emphasis on experience. It recognises that meaning is first constructed jointly by participant and researcher during data collection. IPA embraces the subsequent interpretive role of the researcher during the data analysis (Larkin, et al., 2006). Smith, Jarman and Osborn (1999) argue that IPA recognises that the research exercise is a dynamic process. The aim of IPA is to explore the detail of the participants' view of something, whilst the researcher attempts to make sense of that other personal world through a process of interpretative activity.

There is some common ground with grounded theory, in terms of IPA's inductive approach. However, IPA is forthright about the conceptions that the researcher brings to the data (Larkin, et al., 2006). This is a significant facet to this study. In grounded theory data is driven with a heavy reliance on the emergence of themes whilst IPA is more interpretative. The basic process of IPA is to move from the particular to the general. It begins with descriptive and experiential coding. The analysis then moves towards the development of themes which allow for a more interpretative and contextual account. Ultimately I was concerned that grounded theory may have limited my understanding of the supervisors' lunchtime story to an account of lunchtime experiences and the

social processes. By contrast IPA is more concerned with gaining a better understanding of the quality and texture of individual experiences, that is, the nature or essences of the supervisors' lunchtime experiences. Thus, unlike grounded theory, IPA would give an account of the supervisors' lunchtime experiences and the social processes whilst also giving insight into the supervisors' psychological world.

A commonality between discourse analysis and IPA is the interpretative focus on context and language. Discourse analysis and IPA share a commitment to the importance of language and qualitative analysis but differ in their perception of the status of cognition. (Smith, Jarman and Osborn, 1999). *'Discourse analysis is generally sceptical of the possibility of mapping verbal reports on to underlying cognitions'* (Chapman and Smith, 2002, p126). Furthermore, discourse analysis suggests that we should not infer about the psychological state or intentions of the people who produced it (Reid, et al., 2005). IPA by contrast is concerned with cognitions, that is, with understanding what the respondent thinks or believes about the topic. Thus IPA, while recognising that a person's thoughts are not transparently obvious from the interview transcript, involves a process in order to be able to say something about that thinking. IPA is concerned with language use and cognition and affect. Smith (1996) has developed IPA from a broad base of theoretical influences. IPA for instance shares with cognitive psychology and social cognition a central concern with unravelling the relationship between what people think (cognition), say (account) and do (behaviour), (Smith and Eatough, 2006). Analysis through IPA permits the researcher to make some manner of inferences about people's experiences on the basis of what they say. These inferences might be cautious because IPA recognises that the constructionist focus on language does demonstrate that alternative versions of stories are

always possible. Essentially the inductive and iterative procedures of IPA are intended to gain a third-person perspective i.e. the researcher's view of someone else's experience – an 'insider's perspective' on the participants world as reconstructed by the researcher (Reid, et al., 2005). As such I considered that, unlike grounded theory or discourse analysis, IPA would permit me to make cautious inferences about the supervisors' understanding of their experiences and feelings about lunchtime based on what they said. Through analysis I would aim to explore the relationship between what they thought, said and did.

In essence, the theoretical underpinnings of IPA are:

- Phenomenology

In that it has a focus on the lived experience of the participant. The aim of this research is to focus on supervisors' daily lunchtime experiences.

- Ideography

Involving the detailed analysis of elements of the subjective experience of the social world.

- Hermeneutic inquiry

The meanings which individuals ascribe to events are central, but those meanings are only obtained through a process of social engagement and a process of interpretation. It is about interpreting and being empathic towards supervisors' identity. It involves questioning and being critical.

- Double hermeneutic

Interpretation of the participant's experiences depends on, and is complicated by, the researcher's own conceptions.

*'The participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world'. (Smith and Osborn, 2003, p51).*

This is particularly pertinent given the researcher's prior experience and interest in the area of lunchtimes.

Hence, IPA has been selected over both grounded theory and discourse analysis as its sole purpose is to unravel the meanings of experiences in a systematic and detailed way (Smith 1999). It aims for fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived. In using a phenomenological approach to the analysis it will be possible to be descriptive but also to unravel relationships between the supervisors' and the lunchtime context within the wider school context. Also, it will be possible to explore the supervisors' psychological world and disclose the essences or structures of meaning they hold. This idiographic and inductive method, which seeks to explore participants' personal lived experiences, is phenomenological in its concern for individuals' perceptions. However, identifying more strongly with hermeneutic traditions, it recognises the central role played by the researcher. IPA encourages an open phenomenological attitude that refrains from imposing external frameworks and sets aside judgements about the 'realness' of the phenomenon.

#### **3.4.4 IPA, Case Studies and Focus Groups**

IPA is particularly suited to a number of individual interviews. This research involves a case study focus group and two interviews. There are five participants in this research but the data is being managed as a single unit. Smith (2008, internet posting) encourages research to be conducted on samples of between 1- 6. This, he argues, allows for an emphasis on a detailed examination and

insightful hermeneutics of the participant's lived experience. Smith considers though that engagement with the data, internal coherence, rigour, persuasiveness and commitment are more important than sample size. The outcomes may not be absolutes but rather transferable insights.

As this is a case study it will not be possible to do cross-interview comparisons to look for commonalities, but IPA is still an appropriate means of analysing the data.

*'IPA is a strongly idiographic approach concerned with detailed analysis of the case, either as an end in itself or before moving on to similarly detailed analysis of other cases'. (www.psyc.bbk.ac.uk).*

Further justification for conducting IPA on a case study can be found in Smith's discussion of the development and contribution of IPA in qualitative research in psychology.

*'It is possible to push the idiographic logic further and conduct an IPA analysis on a single case and I think such work is important in clearly marking a place for the significant contribution of the case in its own right' (Smith, 2004, p42).*

Indeed accounts of various studies detail IPA being carried out with case studies, (for example Bramley and Eatough, 2005; de Visser and Smith, 2006).

IPA had traditionally developed as an approach committed to the detailed exploration of personal experience. Smith (2004) is therefore a little cautious over its use with focus groups. This is not ruled out however, with Smith declaring focus groups to be *'another area ripe for exploration'* (Smith, 2004, p50). This view is substantiated by de Visser and McDonald (2007) who point out

that in using IPA with pairs it allows for exploration of the identity of couples. Similarly Majors (2007, posted on IPA internet forum) explained that working with pairs takes account of interchanges and discussion. Moreover, Brocki and Wearden (2006) conducted a systematic review of papers which had employed IPA. They noted that a number of studies used focus groups. Brocki and Wearden suggested that it was possible that the same accounts for neutral topics, such as service provision (as opposed to more personal matters), would have been given if participants had been interviewed individually, or as part of a group. As with the case study, IPA has previously been used with other focus group research (for instance Smith et al., 1999; Rabiee 2004; Fade, 2004; Vandrevalla, et al., 2005; Jordan, et al., 2007; de Visser and McDonald 2007). In their paper on using IPA to explore experience of living with a visible facial disfigurement, O'Dell and Prior (2009) argue that interviewing parents and child together allowed both participants to interject, comment and add information such that rich and detailed interviews were achieved.

Smith (2004) suggests that when analysing the interview transcripts this could be done at two levels. Initially this would be with individual responses (if there is a confidence that individuals have been able to freely express their views). Analysis at a group level could then follow. However, I would argue that in this study analysing individual comments, rather than the group comments, would have detracted from the core underpinnings of this research. This research is about the shared nature and the joint experiences of supervisors.

### **3.4.5 Limitations of IPA**

Whilst IPA is considered to be the most appropriate way of considering the interview data in this study, potential weaknesses or limitations of this approach need to be considered also.

It might be argued for instance that analysis cannot be both phenomenological and interpretive. However Fade (2004) persuades that it is phenomenological in that IPA seeks an insider's perception of the lived experience. It is also interpretive in that it acknowledges the researcher's personal beliefs and embraces the view that understanding requires interpretation. Influences on the researcher's views have already been revealed. Reflexivity will be discussed in more detail later (Chapter 3, section 3.7.2).

Willig (2001) suggests that the main problem with IPA is that it romanticises 'experience'. Willig also argues that if there is intended to be a distinction between 'experience' and 'cognition', this distinction is insufficiently theorised. However, Smith, et al. (1999) argues that individuals hold a set of cognitions (ideas, beliefs, expectations, etc.) which they use to make sense of the world and to act in the world. As with IPA, this study is about the reality as supervisors perceive it to be. It is interested in how they engage with the context of lunchtime. The research is not concerned with why such experiences take place. IPA assumes that people's interpretations are bound up with social interactions and processes, just as supervisors are part of the complex interacting context of the lunchtime at school.

Willig counters that direct access to someone else's experiences is not possible but IPA does not claim that it is. IPA accesses an account of others' experiences, and tries to make sense of these.

Another potential limitation to IPA is that language is the means by which participants communicate their views. This research assumes that language provides supervisors with the necessary tools to capture their experiences. It is relying on the representational validity of language. However, it is possible that it is language that actually constructs, rather than describes, reality as the same event might be described in different ways. Using the focus group approach will, to some extent, address this, because supervisors will be able to give different accounts and perspectives on the same issues.

#### **3.4.6 Summary of Methodological Rationale**

In drawing together the influences on me, as a researcher (as detailed in Chapter 1) and the theoretical underpinnings of the methodology and data analysis, what I intended to do in this research was:

- Understand and reflect on my perspective;
- Account for and be sensitive to context;
- Give supervisors the opportunity to share their lunchtime story;
- Adopt an open-ended stance on the data collection and analysis;
- Create a balance between description and interpretation of the data;
- Focus on the meaning – not accuracy;
- Offer a transparent analysis (IPA stages that are grounded in verbatim examples) that will focus on meaning;
- Present a plausible and meaningful account of the supervisors' lunchtime story.



### **3.5 Research Issues**

#### **3.5.1 Introduction**

Thus far I have established that lunchtime supervisors are an integral part of lunchtimes, and of children's lunchtime experiences. However, there is a paucity of information on supervisors' views on lunchtime. This particular research intends to explore the views of a group of supervisors to gain an insight into their lunchtime story. Consistent with Denscombe's (1998) suggestion, this research aims to be competent. To demonstrate competency explicit account will be given of how the research was undertaken. The researcher's self will be recognised as an influence (and reflexivity is a prominent feature of this research). The conclusions of the research will seek to do justice to the complexity of the phenomenon being investigated. In the following section equally important research issues will be scrutinized.

#### **3.5.2 Validity**

This is a qualitative study. In response to some criticisms of validity Maxwell (1992) counters this saying that the existing categories of validity are based on underlying positivist assumptions about quantitative and experimental research. This is a view endorsed by Smith (1996), who asserts that qualitative and quantitative research have different epistemological priorities and commitments. Validity should not necessarily be about the specific research techniques, but should be about its relationship to those things that it is intended to be an account of. Maxwell proposes an account of validity that makes explicit the common-sense conceptual structure that is implicit in much of the qualitative research. The core categories that Maxwell uses will be applied to this study.

- Descriptive Validity. The account provided will be factual and accurately reported, without intended distortion.
- Interpretive Validity. Interpretation of the lunchtime supervisors' perspectives will rely on their words and concepts. There will be opportunity to probe for meaning and understanding.
- Theoretical Validity. The approach to the research has had regard to theoretical constructs. Furthermore the outcomes of the research may lead to a conceptual framework which lends some theoretical validity.
- Generalisation. There is one school in this study. However I will endeavour to be rigorous and systematic so that some *fuzzy* generalisations may be made, which are neither likely to be true in every case, nor likely to be untrue in every case (Bassey, 1999). Arguably it is feasible that theoretical generalisations may be applicable to other contexts (Gomm, 2004). Further, the research methods and analysis process could be transferred to another setting.

Ultimately the issue about validity concerns 'face validity' (Brown and Dowling, 1998), which is about whether the research captured what it intended to capture. The research is situation specific and as such can provide relevant information specific to that situation. However such information is inevitably at risk of bias. There may be some subject bias, for example supervisors may seek to please. There will be some aspects of what supervisors say that I would have no way of corroborating. This is not a significant concern as the research is not about searching for the facts about lunchtimes. There may also be some researcher bias (for instance misinterpretation of what is said, observed or analysed). A willingness to adopt a reflective stance may minimise researcher bias.

### **3.5.3 Transparency**

Transparency is provided through excerpts of raw data, in the form of verbatim quotations, alongside my accounts of them. This allows the reader to make a 'validity check' between the data and the researcher's account.

### **3.5.4 Trustworthiness**

The aim of the research is to present a convincing account of the supervisors' lunchtime story. In completing the research and presenting the results I hope to demonstrate commitment and rigour. I will endeavour to be sensitive to the context.

### **3.5.5 Triangulation**

Triangulation implies that there is more 'truth' to be found if the same results are achieved using different methods. It is accepted that exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular reality being investigated. There needs to be some confidence that the data generated is not simply an artefact of one specific method of investigation. Triangulation is about bringing together different kinds of evidence so that they can be compared and contrasted, to enable some confidence in the soundness of the data. This study addresses issues of triangulation and in particular the confidence in the soundness of the data through:

- Triangulation within method, which is the two focus group interviews. This combines the different perspectives of the individual supervisors on the same topic.
- The detailed and different levels of analysis. Reference will also be made to member validation which was sought to reflect on whether the findings were

plausible and credible. Validation by the supervisors would further increase confidence in the soundness of the data.

### **3.6 Ethics**

#### **3.6.1 Introduction**

Figueroa (2000) says that a core word in thinking about ethics is 'ought' – ethics provide guidance though not definite answers. It implies the need for thoughtfulness and reflexivity for a critical approach on issues of rightness and justifiability. The general principle is that one should act responsibly: respecting truth, self and others. Such issues were considered throughout this study and key principles will be presented in the following sections.

#### **3.6.2 Informed Consent**

The British Psychological Society Code of Ethics (2006) provides guidance on ethical issues, which includes issues of respect for individuals. It advises ensuring that individuals are given opportunity to understand the nature, purpose, and anticipated consequences of research so that they may give informed consent. Also, researchers must have due regard for the well-being, personal values and dignity of those involved. Further, research that involves observation should be restricted to situations where it would be a reasonable to do so. The Code goes on to provide guidance on debriefing arrangements.

Epstein (1998) argues that in all research there are always issues around power and politics. The issue of 'informed consent' could be significant to the lunchtime supervisors, who may perceive a lack of status within the school. The importance of an interviewee fully understanding what it is that they are agreeing to be interviewed about and to retain the right to indicate any boundaries which the

researcher may not cross is emphasized by a number of writers (Bell, 1993; Robson, 2002).

Prior to conducting this study a meeting was arranged with the supervisors. Care was taken to outline the details of the research. I tried to attain a level of subjective confidence that supervisors understood the research aims, its potential implications and their contribution. Feedback arrangements were also confirmed. I was reassured that individual supervisors willingly engaged in the research.

Direct work with children was not involved so there was no requirement to seek parent/guardian permission. However, observing during lunchtime would inevitably involve observing aspects of children's play, behaviour and interaction with supervisors. Therefore parents/guardians and children at the school were informed about the research and invited to discuss this further.

### **3.6.3 Confidentiality**

Supervisors were assured of confidentiality relating both to their identities and to the content of the interviews. One ethical consideration was of course that what individual supervisors would be sharing with me, they would inherently be sharing with the other supervisors. However, an assumption was made that it would be unlikely that particularly sensitive or personal information would be disclosed during the interviews. Nonetheless, supervisors were advised of confidentiality and sensitivity towards each other.

It was intended that the recordings of the interviews would be stored on mini discs which would remain secure with access restricted to the researcher. The

transcripts would form part of the written account of the research but individuals would not be identified.

#### **3.6.4 Respect**

In this research it was thought particularly important to demonstrate respect towards supervisors. Equally, it was agreed that the interview discussion would be steered away from unprofessional or personal remarks about children and their families, and other school staff.

#### **3.6.5 Sensitivity**

Research needs to guard against causing distress or insult to those involved. This research was explicitly about an individual's job. The research process had to ensure that individuals did not develop a sense of failure or anxiety. Potentially the research might have revealed that supervisors held their role in very little esteem and this would need to be handled sensitively with the school. Potentially difficult or sensitive issues may be raised and would need to be handled diplomatically and with understanding.

#### **3.6.6 Issues of Power**

The perceived status of supervisors in the school system has already been raised. Thus the way in which the research would be conducted would need to attempt to reduce the power imbalance in some way. Moreover, this study actively sought to boost the status of supervisors by reinforcing the high esteem in which I held their views

Simple but potentially powerful strategies were employed to address the balance of power between myself, as researcher, and the supervisors. Talking with them about the research to gain their consent was useful. I explicitly recognised the

challenging role that they have in school. Informal conversation and preparing refreshments together were particularly helpful. Finally, actively seeking the views of supervisors at the analysis stage also helped to create an ethos of collaborative working.

I was also sensitive to the issue of self-presentation (an individual supervisor wishing to present themselves in a positive light).

Verbal and written feedback will be given to the school and supervisors.

Although this isn't important to the research study as such, it is considered to be an integral aspect to the approach that I adopt when working with schools and supervisors more generally. This promotes the status of supervisors and encourages them and others, to value their input.

### **3.7 Reflexivity**

#### **3.7.1 Introduction**

The methodological rationale makes a case for the research drawing on a phenomenological interpretative paradigm in which the researcher's interpretation is integral to the research outcomes. In this written account of the research there has been reference to my involvement in the area of lunchtimes. It seemed imperative that I reflect on my own pre-understandings and frameworks.

The issue of researcher involvement will be explored in the following section.

#### **3.7.2 Reflexivity**

Qualitative methods and in-depth interviews as a method of gathering data have tended to be associated with feminist research (Edwards, 1993). The researcher

is a central part of the research process and personal feelings and experiences should be taken into account.

The personal influences which shaped the way in which the research was intended to be carried out have been outlined earlier (Chapter 1). The theoretical stance that was adopted as a part of this study was made clear from the outset with the assertion that lunchtime has a complex and co-constructed culture. Later, the phenomenological and interpretive nature of the research was discussed with an explanation for the rationale for using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. In adopting this approach I had to embrace a phenomenological attitude, which retains a wonder and openness to the data. At the same time I had to identify, manage or perhaps restrain pre-understandings (Finlay, 2008). It is appreciated that I should have a willingness to listen and understand with sensitivity and flexibility (Finlay 2008).

Reflexivity urges us to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular story '*...influences, acts upon and informs such research*' (Nightingale and Cronby, 1999, p228). Reflexivity is about reprocessing knowledge and understanding and being sensitive to emotions. The reflective learning process depends on some level of self-awareness (Brown 2004).

The judgment of the researcher and the perspective of supervisors are not necessarily separate processes (Edwards, 1993) and since an emphasis within IPA is the researcher making sense, through inference, of what was said during interview, reflexivity is of particular significance to this study. Effectively, the researcher functions as a channel through which the experiences are conducted and constructed. As such the researcher needs to engage in transparent reflexivity (Larkin, et al., 2006). This requires an awareness of the researcher's



contribution to the construction of meaning throughout the research process, and an appreciation of the impossibility of remaining outside of one's subject matter while conducting research.

Involvement in the area of lunchtimes and working with supervisors for some years will undoubtedly have influenced me as a researcher. This position is to be valued, but acknowledged. Through previous discussions with supervisors I have gained an insight into their views about their role and lunchtimes more generally. Further, there are the emotional draws of wanting to portray supervisors positively and to celebrate the work that they do.

Thus, in this study, my involvement, understanding and emotions demand for both:

- Personal reflexivity

The way in which my values, experiences, interests and beliefs have shaped the research. This would include thinking about how I may have affected and perhaps changed the research.

- Epistemological reflexivity

This requires some thought as to how the research question, methods and analysis may have 'constructed' the data and the findings. Had the research question been investigated differently this might have given rise to a different understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Willig, 2001).

Chapter 1 outlined my background so that I was clear about the potential influences on me as a researcher. Prior involvement with other supervisors has shaped my relationships with them and my respect of them as a group of professionals. Similarly in this research a relatively close relationship was

established with the supervisors. This close relationship will, I think, help me to hear what is being said in the interviews. However I considered it important to be aware of the ethical dilemmas surrounding the relationship between knowledge and power and the issues of subjectivity and objectivity. This was pertinent throughout the research but specifically so during data analysis because it is here that the supervisors' account of their lunchtime experiences would be ascribed meanings and transformed into an understanding of their lunchtime story. Furthermore analysis was to be a solitary exercise and I wanted to present an honest and reliable account.

Doucet and Mauthner (2002) offered guidance on some of the epistemological ethical dilemmas that this study might present:

*'A wide and robust concept of reflexivity should include reflecting on, and being accountable about, personal, interpersonal, institutional, pragmatic, emotional, theoretical, epistemological and ontological influences on our research, and specially about our data analysis process'. (Doucet and Mauthner, 2002, page 134)*

To reconcile any tensions that might arise from such influences I therefore committed to act responsibly in identifying pressures or assumptions that might cause me to read and interpret the supervisors' story in a particular way. Hence my position in the research will be explored through a Reflective Diary to support the process of reflexivity. The Reflective Diary is presented in the Appendices (Appendix 1). The process of analysis will also be detailed in the written account of the research (Chapter 4, section 4.3.4).

## **Chapter 4**

### **Implementation of the Research and Analysis**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter is sub-divided into two main parts:

- 4.2 Describes how the research was completed.
- 4.3 Provides a summary of the analysis process.

#### **4.2 Implementation of the Research**

##### **4.2.1 Introduction**

Through a review of the background literature it has been established that lunchtime supervisors are an integral part of the shared lunchtime context. Little is known about their views on lunchtimes and therefore a study to explore these is warranted. Through a case study of one school, focus group interviews will be conducted with supervisors. The interview process will be supported by an observation. The analysis of the interviews will hopefully yield the supervisors' story of lunchtimes.

##### **4.2.2 Preliminary Study**

A preliminary study at School A was undertaken to refine the focus group interview. This provided opportunity to confirm that the interview was a constructive forum within which supervisors were able to share their views about

lunchtimes. The interview questions were also reviewed at this stage. The preliminary study further informed the conduct of the main study. For instance:

- I established the likely time it would take to conduct the interviews, with time for more informal conversation and settling (about 2 hours). Also I learned that it was more efficient and less obtrusive to digitally record the interview rather than make any written notes.
- The importance of developing rapport was highlighted. Power and self-esteem issues are considered to be potentially significant issues in this research and for lunchtime supervisors more generally. I appreciated the need to ensure that during the interview emphasis was very much on what the supervisors wanted to say. My role was as facilitator.
- I understood the need to establish protocols and manage the interview. This included, for example confidentiality, mutual respect and the finish time. The preliminary study also highlighted the potential need for sensitive management to curtail some of the discussion, to manage any more dominant members and to encourage everybody to speak.
- Supervisors involved in the preliminary study were asked their views on the interview questions. They confirmed that the questions encouraged discussion about lunchtime at school, were easily understood and covered the main issues they would anticipate as being important to supervisors. Further information on the questions is provided later in this chapter, at 4.2.8b.
- Some of what was discussed in the interview was closed to me because of unfamiliarity with the context. Discussion about specific areas of the

playground for instance was not fully understood. Moreover, I wondered if there were aspects of the lunchtime which they did not think to mention during interview. This suggested that an observation at lunchtime could enhance my understanding of what the supervisors discussed during interview. Furthermore, the observation could help to generate additional questions for a second interview.

Data generated from the preliminary study was not subjected to a process of analysis. The purpose of the preliminary study was to offer useful guidance on how to conduct the main study. It further encouraged a sense of confidence that engaging supervisors in a semi-structured focus group interview would facilitate the telling of their story. In the preliminary study for instance the supervisors began with some initial discussion about the convenience of the role of the supervisors but they went on to portray an image of the role as being multi-faceted. There was much about nurturing roles, supporting children to learn as they played and helping them to develop their social skills. There was also discussion of the tensions that surround lack of communication between them and other staff in school and the problems of behaviour management.

Therefore, on the basis of what I learned through the preliminary study, I decided to conduct a case-study. The supervisors would be interviewed as a focus group, allowing about 2 hours for each interview. The same set of questions used for the preliminary study would be used for the main study. The interviews would be recorded. I would adopt a similar style in developing rapport and in managing the interviews. I also decided to observe during lunchtime and follow this with a second interview with the same group of supervisors. This would provide a joint reference and opportunity for further discussion.

Details of the preliminary study may be found in the Appendices (Appendix 2).

### **4.2.3 School selection**

The research was conducted in Carlisle, North Cumbria.

As part of the school selection process for the main study initial agreement from four primary schools and supervisors working at those schools was gained. All of the schools selected had not previously been involved in initiatives or training involving lunchtimes.

Ultimately one school was randomly selected from the four, literally using the 'name out of the hat' strategy. The remaining three schools have subsequently received some input about improving lunchtimes.

The main study was conducted at School B. The selected school is an average sized school, with 160-190 pupils on roll, aged between 3-11 years. Most pupils come from less advantaged parts of the local area and the proportion entitled to free school meals is high. There were no pupils from minority ethnic groups, although the school is often used by traveller families. The authorized absence rate was less than 7% and the unauthorized rate was less than 1%. At Key Stage 2 the number of pupils gaining Level 4 in English, Maths and Science was within the low-average range, both locally and nationally (Good Schools Guide, 2005). The percentage of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs was around 7%. An additional 8% were identified as having non-statutory special educational needs. The most recent Ofsted inspection report deemed it to be a 'satisfactory school which gave satisfactory value for money' (Ofsted Inspection report, 2005).

#### **4.2.4 Consent of the Lunchtime Supervisors**

Agreement to be part of the research was initially gained by the Head Teacher who met informally with supervisors. A research outline was given verbally with the likely expectations of the supervisors explained. Subsequently I met with supervisors to provide more detail about the research, expectations and feedback arrangements. Supervisors were given opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. At this stage there was also discussion and reassurance about the potential impact on supervisors. It was confirmed that respect and confidentiality were paramount and that withdrawal from the research, at any point, was an option. Supervisors were not paid for their participation.

My previous experience related to lunchtimes was shared. I presented myself as an understanding and interested researcher. It was at this early stage that the relationship between myself and the supervisors was being established.

#### **4.2.5 Informing Children**

At a school assembly the Head Teacher informed the children that a researcher would be visiting to observe during the lunchtime. They were also told that the researcher would talk with supervisors. The aim of the research was summarised as being about how lunchtimes were organised and what supervisors do as part of their job. Children were reassured that they would not be directly observed. Children were invited to talk with their teacher, the Head or supervisors, if they wanted to know more about the research.

#### **4.2.6 Informing Parents and Guardians**

Similar information was detailed in a school letter to parents and guardians (Appendix 3). Parents and guardians were invited to contact either the school or the researcher if they wished to ask questions or raise concerns.

#### **4.2.7 Background Information on Lunchtime at the School**

Having gained consent to conduct the research I considered that it would be helpful to gather some background information on the school to provide a contextual framework when talking with supervisors. This was done through informal conversations with the Head Teacher and supervisors. An observation at lunchtime was also undertaken prior to collecting the research data. A sketch of the school grounds was made and photographs were taken of the playground (with the permission of the Head these can be included in this account of the research).

Detailed information about the lunchtime, the playground sketch and photographs (labelled as Photographs 6-9) can found in the Appendices (Appendix 4).



#### **4.2.8 Implementation**

Having gained consent and developed an understanding of lunchtime at the school the implementation of the research was undertaken:

- First semi-structured focus group interview with all five supervisors.
- Observation at lunchtime with all five supervisors present.
- Second semi-structured focus group interview with all five supervisors.

##### **4.2.8a Setting up the Interviews**

Certain procedural matters were common to both the first and the second interviews.

###### ***Situating the interview***

The research aims to elicit supervisors' story about lunchtimes. This might be influenced by contextual factors such as the weather or supervisors own personal internal clock.

Dates and times that were convenient to supervisors were agreed. Interviews were conducted following lunchtime. The first interview was conducted in March, at the start of spring, mid-week. The lunchtime observation took place two weeks later. Two days after this, towards the end of the week, the second interview was conducted. On all occasions the weather was dry and bright. It is possible that supervisors would feel more positively disposed than if the interviews were conducted mid-winter.

This was the supervisors only job and they were physically well. They also confirmed that the lunchtime on both of the interview days and during the observation had been typical of many other days.

### Setting the scene

For both the first and the second group interviews we met in a designated, comfortable room. We were seated at a circular table. The recording device was switched on so that once the interview began it did not inhibit the flow of conversation. I provided refreshments. Such strategies helped to develop rapport and diffuse potential power issues.

I confirmed my availability should anybody wish to share any issues about the interview.

### Ground rules

Basic ground rules were agreed:

- To listen to each other without interruption.
- To wait for a turn to speak.
- To respect each other's views.
- To keep comments general avoiding naming individuals.
- Not repeating what had been said in the interview outside of it.

### Managing the interviews

I was confident in managing supervisors as a group and ensured that everybody was included in the discussion. I adopted an open-stance. Engagement and intimacy were striven for. Facial expressions and tone of voice were moderated to encourage discussion, but not to communicate approval or disapproval. Time was managed well.

## 4.2.8b The First Semi-structured Interview

The purpose of the initial interview was to provide an opportunity for lunchtime supervisors to share their story about lunchtimes in the school in which they all worked. This was conducted as a focus group, using a semi-structured format. The questions that were prepared can be found in the Appendices (Appendix 5). These questions were formulated following previous experience of working with schools on lunchtime issues. Information gathered during the preliminary study

also informed these questions. The interview schedule was devised in such a way that the supervisors would be able to talk about what mattered to them. This would subsequently help me to answer the research question at the analysis stage. This was not a formal interview schedule.

The questions were designed for instance to explore the supervisors' reasons for taking on the role, what they, and others, thought their role encompassed and how they have personally developed since accepting the position. The questions also considered their views about supervisor skills. The questions sought to identify factors that they considered to be barriers as well as others that facilitated their role. The interview questions included one about what makes a good lunchtime and another to explore what an ideal lunchtime might look like.

#### 4.2.8c Observation at Lunchtime

The purpose of the observation was to gather some contextual background to what supervisors had been talking about at the first interview. Moreover, the observational information informed further questions that were prepared in readiness for the second interview.

For the observation I arrived at the same time as supervisors and congregated with them at the school entrance. Effort was made to move around the school and ensure that all supervisors were observed for broadly equal times.

I have observed lunchtimes in many schools and to structure these observations a 'Lunchtime Matrix' has developed over time. This matrix is used to focus attention on key lunchtime themes (such as organisation and supervision arrangements, facilities available to children, interaction between supervisors and with children, lunchtime rules, activities children were observed to engage in,

the behaviour of children, equal opportunities and what appeared to be the purpose of lunchtime). The Completed Lunchtime Matrix following the observation can be found in the Appendices (Appendix 6).

#### 4.2.8d The Second Semi-structured Interview

The purpose of the second interview was to share the observations and further explore the supervisors' story.

I reviewed the observation field notes and prepared a list of questions that might help to facilitate discussion at the second interview. Again the intention was not to prepare a formal interview schedule. The list of questions for the second interview can be found in the Appendices (Appendix 7). These included questions about the supervisors' job title, what they thought had gone well at lunchtime and what had not gone so well, and why. Ideas for improvements were sought. Specific incidents that I had observed were referred to, such as bending down to talk quietly with children, out of bound areas and the management of poor behaviour. Questions were prepared that would encourage them to be reflective in their practice to think about how they might have done things differently, and why. Referring back to the first interview the supervisors had talked about lunchtime being an opportunity for children to develop their play and social skills. At the second interview I asked them to reflect on how children had been able to do this during the lunchtime that I had observed but also at other times. The supervisors were asked about how they had worked together and to explain the role of other school staff.

The same procedural matters as for the first interview were adhered to.

## **4.3 Analysis of the Interviews**

### **4.3.1 Introduction**

Having interviewed the group of supervisors on two separate occasions this produced two mini-disc recordings of the conversations to be analysed.

This research was concerned with learning something about supervisors' psychological world and the meaning the lunchtime has for them. The aim of this research and subsequent analysis is to understand the content and complexity of those meanings rather than measure their frequency. Understanding the content and complexity of those meanings is to be obtained through sustained engagement with the interview transcripts and a process of interpretation.

In this section the analysis of the interviews will be detailed as follows:

- **4.3.2** The use of the Reflective Diary (Appendix 1) is clarified with an explanation of how it was used in the early stages of data analysis.
- **4.3.3** Provides a summary table to outline the IPA stages of analysis.
- **4.3.4** A more detailed explanation of the analysis process is provided with reference to IPA. Photographs of the analysis stages are provided.

### **4.3.2 The Reflective Diary**

Qualitative analysis is inevitably a personal process. This study acknowledges that the analysis of the supervisors' collective lunchtime story depends on and is complicated by my own background and views. However, a process that permits and encourages the double hermeneutic enquiry, which is questioning and critical, can result in an honest and rich analysis of the data. Throughout the research, and particularly when analysing the interview transcripts, personal

notes were written in the Reflective Diary. The Reflective Diary was used as a reflective tool to explore different interpretations of the supervisors' views. The Reflective Diary consists of notes to help me to reflect on the inferences and assumptions that I made during the analysis. Specifically I used the diary to reflect on the level of analysis that is being presented (descriptive, ideographic, summative, interpretative), and why, and to consider where the interpretation came from (existing theory, practice, personal views, novel or emergent ideas). Thus the Reflective Diary became a significant tool in the early stages of the analysis of the interviews.

A quote taken directly from the diary provides a small sample of the personal debate and reflection that I recorded as part of the analysis process:

*'...I am trying to immerse myself (a bit like Alice in Wonderland) amongst the data. I do not want to lose the richness of what they are talking about. I'm a little bothered that sometimes when I look at the transcript it depends on my mood as to how I interpret. I'll need to keep looking at it, again and again, to neutralise (as it were) the impact of my emotional state.*

*I want to explore core feelings and attitudes so I want something that feels, 'right' to me, which intuitively I am comfortable with whatever I try to do with the data. I suppose it's like putting on a pair of comfy slippers. I know that Dr Scholl may have some perfectly, scientifically comfortable shoes, but they just do not feel right to me. I need my not quite perfect but feel good slippers.*

*How trustworthy is my story going to be? Of course I can trust it – it's their story – it's what they think, it isn't relevant if they've got it, 'wrong'.*

*My story is a growing one. I have started from one point and I'm moving. It's like shifting sands, not too fast and it's not shifting the picture totally I'm glad to say. I had one chapter in terms of my views and experiences, then I talked to them and got another and then observed and the colours were added and then I talked some more and the colours became more vivid. I realise it's like a rainbow. I can stand back and see what I think I can see. I strain my eyes and the colours become more vivid, and I think I can see where the rainbow is going. I look away for a moment, then back, and have to re-focus my vision again. But all the time I can not quite see the end of the rainbow, I can not quite see where it starts, I do not know what made it, but it's there, it's relevant, it has a reality. That's what lunchtime supervision is about, or at least that's what an outsider's view of lunchtime supervision is about'.  
(Appendix 1, page 255).*

IPA advocates analysis that is organised, detailed, plausible and persuasive and transparent. The Reflective Diary provided an opportunity to ensure that the analysis I conducted met these criteria and, by including it as an Appendix, I am being transparent in how I came to understand the supervisors' story. I reflect for example on my concerns about how the questions I ask might shape the story that the supervisors share:

*'I'm a bit nervous about analysing these interviews. What if my interpretations are wrong? What if their story has been created by the very first question that I asked? I asked them about the purpose of lunchtimes – they may never have thought of this before but I've suggested to them that they do. They may simply be responding with what they assume I would expect as a reply. I do not know though – perhaps if they talk more about the purpose – if this idea*

*comes out in other things that they say this would give me greater confidence in their initial responses. I'll have to check, and re-check, to look for trends.*

*I have checked through the transcripts and am now confident that the supervisors do think about the purpose of lunchtimes and that it would probably have been a part of their story even if I had not asked that direct question. They go on to talk about learning and social skills for instance in other parts of the interviews. I suppose it's wise to think about this though. What we ask, the way we ask it and the order in which we ask can influence the story that somebody shares with us.*

*Find it hard to separate description/interpretation. I seem to do them simultaneously. Even as I read things spring to mind that might ultimately become a theme, for example a, 'We', (do not know what else to call this at moment) seems to be a theme. This involves mutual support, conflict with teachers and children'. (Appendix 1, page 259).*

Notes in the diary also served as a reminder about the double hermeneutic process that is espoused in relation to IPA:

*'I've been thinking more about doing the analysis. There is some tolerance of ambiguity and contradictions but that's okay as it's a reflection of the social reality being investigated.*

*Remember this is double hermeneutic – questioning and critical. I've looked back at how I said I would interpret the transcripts. In the early stages I want to think about how what they are saying can be summarised but I also need to think about what is underlying this. How does it compare with what I've*



*already analysed? In the interpretation I need to ask myself questions about what it means and why they talked about it. I need to consider what the existing literature has to say about that. When clustering the themes I will look for things that seem to naturally fall together and consider how I might understand and explain exceptions. What seems a main cluster and what seems subordinate, and why? How do things seem to cluster – conceptually, temporally and contextually? I'll need to keep coming back to this to remind myself of what I am trying to do. I will also have to keep looking back at the actual transcripts to check if what I am saying is grounded in the supervisors' conversations. I must also ask myself if it makes sense. Does it answer the research question? Is the analysis sufficiently interpretative? Can the interpretative account be seen to develop from a phenomenological core? Is the structure clear and meaningful?' (Appendix 1, page 262)*

The cut and paste facility of the word processor was utilised to structure the Reflective Diary notes into broad themes. I repeatedly checked back with the interview transcripts to ensure that the interpretation and structuring of the notes were grounded in what was said during the interviews.

The Reflective Diary may be found in the Appendices (Appendix 1).

### **4.3.3 The IPA Stages of Analysis**

Ultimately the analysis is attempting to capture and do justice to the meanings of supervisors to learn about their school lunchtime world. The analysis aims to give an interpretative and contextual account of the supervisors' collective lunchtime story themes. Those meanings and themes may not be transparently available and need to be obtained through a sustained engagement with the text and a process of interpretation. This engagement with the text involves the initial reading of the interview transcripts and the early tentative ideas that I develop and explore within the Reflective Diary. The analysis of the transcripts developed further and was based on the principles and techniques of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The phenomenological aspect of IPA involves identifying key themes in the data that represent supervisors' psychological experiences. The interpretative aspect of IPA involved me, as the researcher, trying to make sense of these themes and what they tell us about supervisors' experiences. An important factor at the analysis stage is that 'topics' are not to be mistaken for themes. A topic would be something that the supervisors talked about but a theme would be describing a pattern of meaning. The aim of the research was to consider the collective story of a group of supervisors and to understand and interpret the themes within that story. Here, I bring a personal perspective to the data. It is essential to concede that analysis is influenced by my own story. This is explored in the Reflective Diary (Appendix 1).

IPA involves a number of distinct though highly interconnected stages.

Throughout these stages notes were written in the Reflective Diary (Appendix 1).

A copy of the annotated interview transcripts can be found in the Appendices (Interview 1 - Appendix 8; Interview 2 - Appendix 9). The table (Table 1) that

follows on the next page provides an overview of the analysis process. The table is followed by a more detailed account of how the analysis was conducted.

**Table 1: This table shows the sequence of stages that were followed to conduct an analysis of the interviews.**

<b><u>Transcription - Interview 1 and Interview 2</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recordings of both interviews were transcribed.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Familiarisation and Preliminary Themes - Interview 1</u></b> (Annotated version - Appendix 8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerous readings of the interview. Notes made in left-sided margin of significant or interesting comments.</li> <li>• Preliminary list of broad theme words/phrases generated and written in right-sided margin.</li> <li>• Themes written on post-its. Put to one side.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Member validation - Interview 1</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulted with supervisors about initial themes.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Familiarisation and Preliminary Themes - Interview 2</u></b> (Annotated version - Appendix 9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerous readings of the interview. Notes made in left-sided margin of significant or interesting comments.</li> <li>• Preliminary list of broad theme words/phrases generated and written in right-sided margin.</li> <li>• Themes written on post-its. Put to one side.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Sorting – Interview 1 and Interview 2</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-its from both interviews sorted into broadly named initial groups.</li> <li>• Groups were reviewed and post-its were re-sorted. New group names generated as required.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Grounding</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group names and post-its checked against interview transcripts and left and right margin notes. Additional group names and post-its written as required and sorted.</li> <li>• Group names and post-its checked against diary notes. Additional group names and post-its written as required and sorted.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Clustering</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The groups were re-sorted into master clusters.</li> <li>• Under these, subordinate clusters were generated.</li> <li>• Clusters were assigned theme names.</li> <li>• Clusters checked against interview transcripts and diary.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Summary Table</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table of primary, secondary and tertiary themes generated.</li> <li>• An account written with verbatim extracts from interviews.</li> </ul>

#### **4.3.4 Explanation of the Analysis Process**

To adopt a rigorous and logical approach towards the analysis (Dey, 1993) the interview transcripts were subjected to considerable reading, interpretation, and reflection. The process of analysis involved repeated checking that the analysis was grounded in what was actually said during the interviews. An account of the analysis process as outlined in Table 1 will now follow.

## Transcription

To manage the data and to facilitate the analysis the recorded interviews were transcribed. The page layout was set to permit hand written notations in the margins. Each line was numbered.

## Interview 1: Familiarisation and Preliminary themes

- The transcript was read countless times, to become immersed in the details and to gain a sense of the interview. Notes were made in the left margin of anything that seemed interesting or significant. There were some initial attempts to summarise the supervisors' comments. Consistent with IPA this represents a movement from the particular to the general. I began to, 'read between the lines', and make some preliminary interpretations. The aim at this stage was to get a feel for context i.e. what was important to the supervisors at that time. What experiences were being described and claimed, and the key features of those experiences. Some thought was given as to what those experiences might mean to the supervisors.
- The analysis then moved on to look for emerging trends or concepts. The aim at this stage was to endeavour to achieve interaction between me, as a researcher, and the text. This enabled an understanding of what the supervisors said, but also drew on my own interpretative resources. I endeavoured to consider alternative meanings and asked questions about the contextual factors within which the supervisors understanding can be seen to make sense. Analysis through IPA allowed for some inferences about the supervisors' experiences on the basis of what they said, and how they said it. Also I tried to think about what other factors might shape the supervisors' experience or even what the supervisors might achieve through

offering this particular understanding of their experience. The Reflective Diary was used to reflect on such issues. In terms of IPA this was about trying to explore experiences from the supervisors' perspective whilst at the same time exploring and acknowledging my interpretative role through the use of the Reflective Diary (Appendix 1).

- Whilst re-reading the transcript and considering the notes made in the left margin I then attempted to devise broad theme words or short phrases to capture the essential quality of what was being found in the text. These were written in the right side margin.

Some of these theme words or phrases used psychological terminology but were grounded in what was said. Some used the actual words used by the supervisors. At this stage the broad theme words or phrases were not considered to be definitive but were used to enable me to articulate something about the concept that had been identified.

- All of these theme words or phrases were written onto individual post-its which were put to one side.
- A copy of the annotated first interview transcript can be found in the Appendices (Appendix 8).

### Interview 1: Validation

I met again with the supervisors to check with them if the way in which their conversation had been interpreted adequately represented what they had wanted to convey. It was also an opportunity to consider whether the analysis made sense. Supervisors were encouraged to challenge and offer alternative interpretations.

To enable the supervisors to engage with this the analysis process was explained. A brief overview of some of the themes that appeared to be emerging was given. Copies of the Interview 1 transcript with the left-sided and right-sided written comments that I had made were distributed to the supervisors. I selected some excerpts and explained my thinking behind the interpretation and the written comments. The supervisors were then invited to read through the transcript and select other excerpts that they wished to discuss further. The supervisors were asked questions such as:

- Does this make sense?
- Is that what you wanted to say?
- Do these themes represent how you see your role?

The supervisors confirmed that the analysis did make sense. They were satisfied with the way in which the interview had been interpreted. This is discussed further in the Reflective Diary (Appendix 1).

### Interview 2: Familiarisation and Preliminary themes

The analysis of Interview 2 followed the same process of familiarisation and generating a list of preliminary themes as Interview 1. However the validation check with the supervisors was not considered to be necessary.

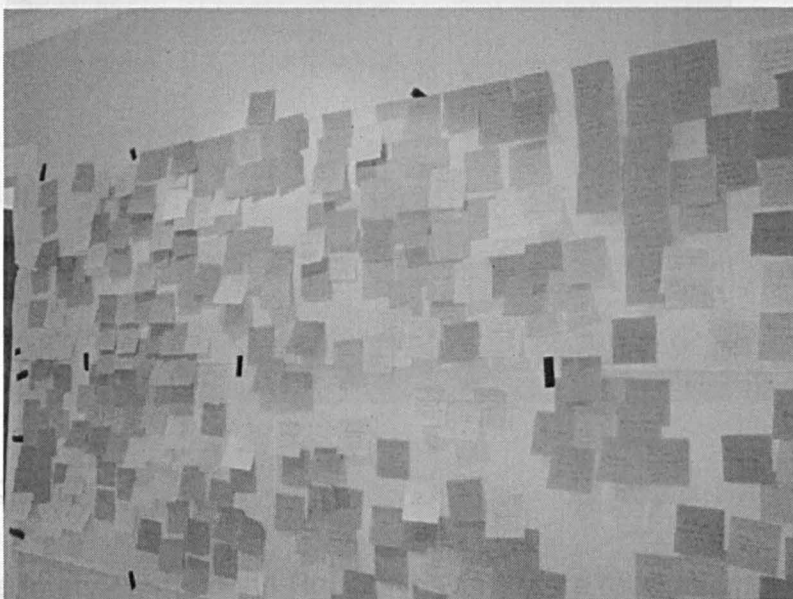
A copy of the annotated second interview transcript can be found in the Appendices (Appendix 9).

### Sorting (Interview 1 and Interview 2)

- Ultimately the analysis of Interview 1 and Interview 2 produced a vast number of post-its with theme words or phrases written onto them. Using long sheets of paper stuck onto walls post-its were placed onto the sheets to form broad

groups. These groups were created on the basis of how I considered the words/phrases on the post-its to be similar in some respects because they had common features or ideas. Photographs were taken of this and a sample is included below.

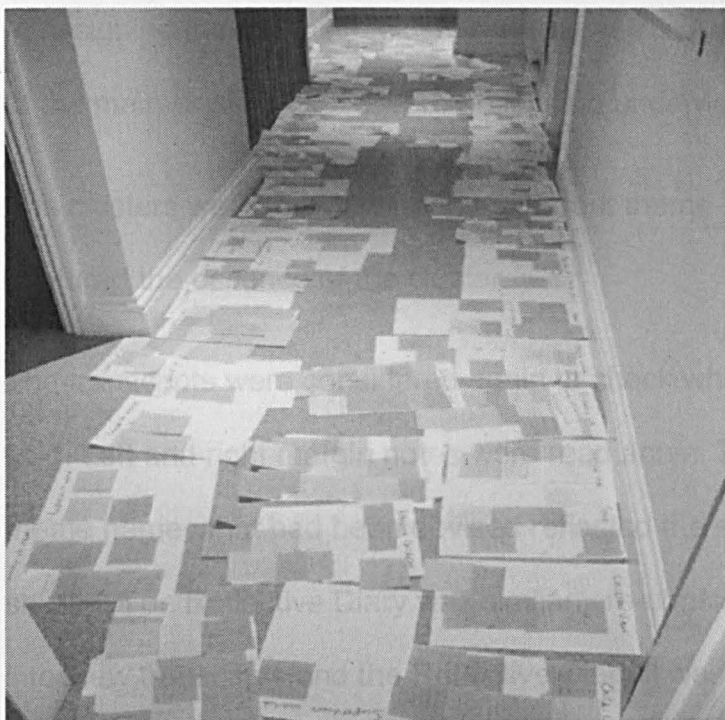
**Photograph 1: A photograph of the initial sorting of the post-its**



- Continuing with the commitment to be rigorous and logical, when all of the post-its were placed in groups on the walls I considered them a little more carefully. Some groups were further divided and alternative groupings were created.
- I then generated words or phrases that captured the essence of a group of post-its. These words or phrases were written onto blank sheets of paper that were then placed on the floor.
- The post-its were taken off the walls and assigned to the newly formed groups. As this was completed further group names were generated when required. A photograph was taken of this and is included below.



## Photograph 2 A sample photograph of the reviewed post-it groups



### Grounding

The interviews and the Reflective Diary were read again. I checked that the group names and the sorting of the post-its captured what was said during the interviews and reflected the interpretations that had been made in the diary. Additional post-its were created as required to be allocated to an appropriate group.

### Clustering

- The IPA process moves from the initial descriptive and experiential coding towards the development of themes which allow for a more interpretative and contextual account to be offered. Having assigned the post-its to the groups on paper they were considered again. The papers were grouped together into broad clusters that were considered to be similar in some respects by implied contrast with other groups. This was repeated a number of times until I was satisfied that the clusters adequately represented the collective story shared

by the supervisors.

- In assigning the groups to clusters some were considered to be subordinate to the main cluster. These were positioned underneath the main clusters.
- The clusters were then assigned a different theme name in a way that captured the essence of the cluster.
- The transcripts were considered again to check what the supervisors had said. Left and right margin notes were read again. This was to check if the theme names that had been devised reflected the story the supervisors had shared. The Reflective Diary was similarly re-considered. In reviewing the interview transcripts and the Reflective Diary it was possible to ensure that each theme was represented by verbatim script and was not an artefact of my own bias. In addition particular attention was given to checking if anything had been lost or if anything seemed more significant in the interview than had been identified through the analysis.
- Deciding upon the master themes required me to be selective. The themes were not selected purely on the basis of their prevalence within the data. Other factors were taken into account. For instance the richness of the particular passages which highlight the themes was considered.
- It was at this point that certain themes were put to one side because they were not rich in evidence in the transcript.
- Photographs were also taken of the clusters of themes. The following photograph shows an initial attempt at trying to understand how themes related to other themes.

- **Photograph 3: A sample of an initial attempt at clustering themes**



### Summary Table

- The analysis process was a thorough one during which the themes and associations between themes altered many times. At one stage there were 11 themes, a number with 15 or so sub themes. Photographs of this were taken, two of which are presented below.

**Photograph 4** An attempt at trying to understand the emergent themes.



**Photograph 5** An alternative initial attempt at trying to understand the emergent themes.





- At this stage information was duplicated and there was not a coherent understanding of the supervisors' story. Using the Reflective Diary (Appendix 1) I tried to think about what it was those themes were actually 'saying'. In doing this it became clear that supervisors wanted to be independent and in control of lunchtimes. It was about their self-esteem and their status. It was also about how the supervisors felt lunchtimes were concerned with children playing and learning to be independent, now and in the future. The emergence of the themes will be discussed in more detail in the presentation of the results (Chapter 5).
- After much consideration and many attempts at trying to make sense of the themes a summary table was produced (and this is presented as Table 2).
- A written account of the interpretation of the supervisors' lunchtime story was prepared supported by verbatim extracts from both interviews (presented in Chapter 5).

At the early stages of the data analysis the Reflective Diary was particularly useful in trying to reflect on what the supervisors' conversations during interview might mean. The diary also provided a means of continued reflection throughout the analysis process. This process of analysis drew directly from the theoretical underpinnings of IPA. For instance, the analysis was phenomenological and ideographic in that it has a focus on supervisors' subjective lunchtime experiences and through analysis it was possible to generate themes that help to understand those experiences. Through hermeneutic inquiry the meanings of these experiences were obtained through a process of engagement and interpretation. The lengthy analysis process encouraged a double hermeneutic

approach in which I tried to make sense of the supervisors trying to make sense of their lunchtime world (Smith and Osborn, 2003).

## **Chapter 5**

### **Presentation of Results and Discussion**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter described how the interview transcripts were thoughtfully and systematically analysed based on the principles and techniques of IPA. This process is detailed in the Reflective Diary (Appendix 1). The personal dialogue recorded within the Reflective Diary provides a transparently detailed explanation of my interpretation of the supervisors' conversation during interview. Within the Reflective Diary there is also contemplation on whether or not the interpretation appears plausible.

In this chapter I will:

- **5.2** Describe how my understanding of the supervisors' story evolved over time through the stages of analysis and in preparing a written account. Specific reference will be made to the Reflective Diary (Appendix 1).
- **5.3** Present a table that provides an overview of the themes that I interpreted from the supervisors' lunchtime story.
- **5.4** Present an account of the story themes with verbatim extracts from the interview transcripts.

- **5.5** Provide an overall summary of the results and the conclusions that were reached. A conceptual framework is offered to enhance understanding of my perspective on the supervisors' lunchtime experiences and the meaning they make of these.

## **5.2 Developing an Understanding of the Supervisors' Lunchtime Story**

The aim of this study was to offer a unique insight into the lunchtime story of a group of lunchtime supervisors. This was to be done through two interviews with the same group of supervisors in which they would be facilitated to share their collective story of lunchtime. It was proposed that through an analysis of the interviews I would be able to understand and interpret the themes within their story.

This understanding began to develop even at the early stages of the analysis. The Reflective Diary was an essential tool in this process. In the diary I reflect on how, having written words and phrases from the interviews onto post-its, I had already begun to interpret the supervisors' story. For instance I was aware of the story describing certain assumptions that were attributed to school staff by the supervisors. This was in terms of their capabilities and relying on a common sense approach to the supervision of large numbers of children in a relatively unstructured situation. Furthermore I reflect on the lunchtime context where there are opportunities for learning through play and being happy. In the diary I raise concern over whether it is appropriate to make such assumptions.

I also realised that there was considerable confusion about the precise nature of their role. It was as though in the absence of clear guidance and regular review supervisors are:



*'...stumbling around, sometimes being like a teacher, sometimes being like a parent but really neither one thing nor another. However, they aren't complaining about lots of difficulties so this must work to some extent'.  
(Appendix 1, page 370).*

In the diary I reflected on the tensions surrounding the sharing of some lunchtime experiences with children. I was not clear at that early stage if the shared experiences served to blur boundaries. I did wonder though if the children and the supervisors were able to reach an unspoken understanding about how those boundaries operate, which is different to the boundaries they have with teachers. I thought this might be about the special nature of the relationship that forms between children and supervisors during lunchtime.

Prior to the detailed analysis I felt that the supervisors conveyed an aspiration to have control over lunchtime but felt they did not have a sense of ownership. I thought that perhaps they needed to be given permissions and a clear steer that the lunchtime is their domain within certain parameters set out in a job description and through collaborative consultation with school staff. The supervisors seem to imply that both of the latter points are absent.

I was confused about the issue of children's behaviour at lunchtimes. I thought they had suggested there were some issues over children being rude to them, and children falling out with each other. None of this seemed to be a significant issue however and there was much about lunchtime that was positive. Then later in Interview 2 supervisors seemed to imply that actually some children are particularly rude towards some supervisors and that possibly there is more physical aggression than I had previously detected. As I continued to read Interview 2 I began to feel that generally the behaviour of children at lunchtime is

of concern. I was uncertain if this was because we were talking about it at that time.

My early thoughts about the supervisors' story were that they were concerned with doing the job well. They appeared to hold a firm belief that at lunchtime supervisors can have a significant impact on children's present experiences but also on how they develop into adults. They expressed concern about being able to manage all the demands made of them however. I developed a sense of them feeling unsupported and unappreciated by the wider school system.

From these initial thoughts I moved towards a more organised and thorough analysis. This began with sorting the post-its into broad clusters. I had for instance a group of post-its which seemed to be saying something about assumptions that supervisors make about children, another that was about knowing children and another about communication. I did this without thinking too much and made quick intuitive decisions.

The next stage of the analysis involved naming the clusters and then re-sorting the post-its. As I did this I realised that the broad headings needed to be broken down more, for instance the broad theme of, 'Taking the job of a supervisor', began to conceptually separate into, 'reasons for being offered it'; 'reasons for taking it'; 'motivation for keeping it'. What I noticed when I was doing this was how different the clusters looked from the initial sorting of post-its. Also I found that alternative ideas would occur to me. I think this is about seeing everything together and physically moving the post-its. It is the multi-sensory aspect of the analysis which brings a different level to it. For instance looking at the post-its at this stage made me realise just how much they said about acting a persona as a supervisor. I was aware of this, and have a heading for this in the diary, but

seeing the post-its and handling them made this a more powerful theme. 'Acting a persona', may be important to the supervisors because they believe that children, 'read them like a book', and they have to be mindful to act as though they are confident and in control. This then ties in with the need to feel that they are, 'in charge', and that others should realise this too. Similarly the supervisors talked about what they saw as their role, which included practical duties.

However, by standing back and looking at what the supervisors said this is only a small part of their story. Actually they are much more concerned with the nurturing aspect of their role. Again this had not suggested itself as a dominant theme when I was doing the initial analysis and it only became apparent through seeing and handling the post-its.

In conducting the analysis I was committed to ensuring that it was grounded in what the supervisors actually said so I continually referred back to the interview transcripts, as well as the diary. In doing this I established that there were parts of the supervisors' story that I felt weren't adequately reflected through the post-its and the sorting and grouping process. For instance the supervisors talked about children needing to let off steam and needing a break from the pressure of learning. The supervisors said that children get this release by being outside and having freedom. I thought that supervisors' views on this were significant as freedom and choice are characteristics of play.

I also felt that the idea that they are, 'in-betweenies', neither a parent nor a teacher, was a significant theme. Similarly the joy of children and the joy of children's play was a strongly positive theme. Equally though there were a number of battle and army references (for instance battlefield of playground, military exercise and being one step ahead). In handling the post-its I realised that they often referred to issues of the age, rather than the gender, of children.

Knowing and seeing children seemed to be imperative to supervisors. I

interpreted supervisors' comments about being a part of the children's lunchtime world as something they considered to be a privilege.

Through the naming of the groups and the re-sorting I began to appreciate that the supervisors felt unappreciated but resigned to this. They wanted to be left to get on with their job but they expressed an experience of being powerless to change anything or be in control. I detected a sense of dejection because they felt they had tried to consult over changes but to no avail. They seemed to feel quite strongly that gut feelings and learning intuitively from experience was vital.

I also began to notice some inconsistencies. For instance they talk a lot about teachers which I had interpreted to reflect conflict. However they also claimed that teachers are approachable and that they feel part of the school. They say if given the opportunity of a miracle they wouldn't change anything. Yet they had identified issues over time pressure, confusion over the precise nature of their role and conflict with teachers.

There were many references to the 'team', and the post-its provided a strong visual intimation of this. I was not clear at this stage why this would be a significant theme.

This stage of the analysis meant that there were pieces of paper strewn over the floor with post-its on them. I considered them again and began to cluster them together. This was difficult however. I could easily have had 'Conflict' as a major cluster with lots of subordinate clusters related to this. There seemed to be so much conflict. For instance I had conflict with teachers, conflict between watching and doing, conflict caused by time and conflict with the Head. In the diary I reflect on my concerns about declaring lunchtime to be a mass of conflict of one form or

another. I appreciated that if this was the experience of supervisors then this is what I would need to depict. However I wanted to look beneath this a little more and explore what might be underlying the conflict. I wondered if this could be a lack of clear guidance on what their role entails. Because of this the supervisors may be inclined to seek security in routines and good organisation, which may in turn put pressure on them because there is so little time to get through everything. It's as though one conflict feeds another.

This clustering took some time and repeated attempts. The diary records this process:

*'I would do it, then leave it for a day and come back to re-consider. I found this made me more open to new insights. I also found that I would come back to the clusters and ask questions. Does it make sense for those to be clustered together? What is it that cluster is saying? Does that cluster convey what the supervisors talked about? Does it reflect my interpretation of what was said? For example I clustered together group headings of 'lonely team', 'unappreciated', 'needing to be needed' and 'expectations of their role'. I was not sure if feeling unappreciated was more to do with the self-esteem of the supervisors than being unsure of what their job entailed. What I did not have together was, 'ownership and a need to be in charge', with, 'routines'. On the second clustering I thought that adhering to routines may be about a control issue or it may be about being unclear about their role so they were clinging to routines for a sense of security. Thus at the second stage I was not yet sure which cluster routines would best fit with.*

*At a later stage a cluster of 'Communication' included relationships with the Head. However, when I reviewed this I did not think that the supervisors had been telling me that because of poor communication their relationship with the Head was poor. I was finding therefore that whilst clustering seemed to make sense at the time of doing it I really did need to repeat this process and question what I was doing much more'. (Appendix 1, page 379).*

*'I had, 'behaviours', as a group. At an early stage I had this as a conflict. When I looked at this again and referred back to the interview transcripts and the diary I realised that the supervisors were saying those things had to be managed. They were also saying though that much of the behaviour was within the bounds of what they considered to constitute a 'normal', part of behaviour and was related to children achieving a sense of self and independence. Some of the behaviour post-its though were about individuals challenging the system a little more so I moved this to a group saying something about challenging the ownership of lunchtimes and also to another group about assumptions that supervisors make about children.' (Appendix 1, page 380).*

In the midst of the clustering part of the analysis I realised that I had subsumed, 'communication', into other clusters. For instance at one stage I had a cluster that was about respect and relationships and included communication in this. At another stage it was in a cluster about self-esteem. As I re-visited the interviews and the diary I began to appreciate that subsuming a communication theme did not do this issue justice. Communication was actually a very significant issue for the supervisors and I felt that it warranted being a cluster in its own right.

Ultimately though I realised that I had to reach the point where analysis had to stop as I was finding additional analysis no longer contributed to discovering anything new.

To try to present a coherent account of my understanding of the supervisors' lunchtime story I began to try to structure the clusters. Even at this stage I would refer back to the transcripts and the interviews. This helped me to see how in trying to impose structure it was all too easy to move away from what was actually said. For instance an early organisation of the clusters did not reflect the sense that the supervisors were giving permission (i.e. we *let* them). Also I had immersed the notion of, 'power', into the clusters but I wondered if it perhaps needed to be a cluster on its own, or more clearly combined with another.

'Needing to be needed' was located with self-esteem but I questioned whether it was a more prominent feature of the supervisors' story than this. Finally there was the issue of collusion, generated through sharing the world of the child. I decided to return to the transcripts to confirm if this was what the supervisors were describing to me.

After much pondering, questioning and moving of pieces of paper I seemed to have formulated a structure that provided an account of my interpretation of the supervisors' perspectives. To be sure this was true to the actual story the supervisors shared I again returned to the transcripts, post-its and diary to check that the theme names adequately expressed a plausible understanding of the supervisors' story. This proved to be a useful exercise as supervisors made assumptions about children wanting to help but this was not clear in the clusters that I had. Similarly, 'routines', was clearly in the clusters but not, 'rota', which was a significant part of their story as, I think, this was something they were confident had been within their control. Other elements of the story that I thought

weren't adequately reflected in the existing clusters was the supervisors' openness to change and consider new ideas. Their belief that they are role models to the children, the 'unique' relationship they have with children and the team identity were strong themes. I also interpreted their willingness to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, and work around these as being prominent in their story. At the early stage of analysis the supervisors' perception of the playground 'battlefield' and the they / us divide between them and teaching staff did not seem to be well represented. Further, although teachers and the Head Teacher were listed as subordinate themes in the clusters I did not think that this really communicated what the issues were. When I re-considered the data the supervisors' story was about consultation, collaboration, communication and understanding each other's role.

Even at the writing up stage the analysis continued. As I presented the themes that I had interpreted from the supervisors' story I found that there were some that could not easily be supported by quotes from the interviews. The diary contains reference to this:

*'...in the Learning theme I have put a sub theme of 'Support for teachers' but when I refer back to the interviews and the diary the supervisors do not really talk about their role in supporting the role of teachers in relation to children's learning. They do think they have a part to play in children's learning, but they do not say this is about them supporting the teachers. It's a subtle difference but important I think. It says their priorities are about the children directly'. (Appendix 1, page 384).*

However, realising that themes may not be easily supported by quotes did not necessarily mean that I had 'got it wrong' because the sub themes may well have



come from my own interpretation. It did mean however that I needed to re-check and be very careful about the results that I was presenting to be sure they reflected the supervisors' story and that my interpretation was grounded in the transcripts.

Throughout the analysis process I had recorded my thoughts about the supervisors' lunchtime story in the diary. In this section I have presented aspects of my thoughts at different stages of the analysis as I was trying to make sense of the supervisors' story. As stated in the explanation of the analysis process (section 4.3.4) I tried to think about what it was those themes were actually 'saying'. The emergence of the themes will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

### **5.3 Tabled Overview of the Lunchtime Themes**

As I initially began to prepare a written account of the themes that I had interpreted from the supervisors' story I was somewhat overwhelmed. At one stage I had identified 11 themes, a number with 15 or so sub themes. There was not a coherency in what I was doing. I stepped back from it all again and tried to think about what it was those themes were actually 'saying'. I reminded myself that in using IPA to understand the supervisors' experiences and how they make sense of those experiences I needed to consider their perspectives. The analysis should not be restricted to children's experiences. In being more reflective it became apparent that supervisors wanted to be independent and in control of lunchtimes. It was about their self-esteem and their status. It was also about how the supervisors felt lunchtimes were about the children playing and learning to be independent, now and in the future. This of course is about autonomy and agency for both. The supervisors' story further suggested that they were aware

of or directly experienced challenges to autonomy and agency, and, likewise, factors that strengthened autonomy and agency.

IPA stresses the importance of lived experience and how the supervisors make sense of those experiences. This is coupled with a subjective and reflective process which enabled me, as researcher, to gain access to an understanding of their experiences. The supervisors' story that they shared with me during the interviews was one in which they are trying to establish their own autonomy and agency whilst at the same time trying to facilitate children developing their autonomy and agency.

In coming to this realisation the interpretation of the supervisors' story started to make sense. Ultimately the analysis and the Reflective Diary had identified two primary themes. Associated with each primary theme were two secondary themes. Each of the secondary themes encompassed a number of different tertiary themes.

In separating the primary, secondary and tertiary themes I am aware that to some extent the delineation is arbitrary. Some of the tertiary themes for instance could have rightly been placed in more than one secondary theme. Similarly some of the interview quotes could have been allocated to more than one theme.

The primary, secondary and tertiary themes will be presented on the next page in a table (Table 2).

**Table 2: Themes from the supervisors' lunchtime story**

<u>Primary Theme</u>	<u>Secondary Themes</u>	<u>Tertiary Themes</u>
Supervisors' Agency and Autonomy	Challenge	<b>Self-esteem</b> Personal feelings; Qualifications and experience; Offer and acceptance of position; Attributes they value; Being needed; Unappreciated.
		<b>Status and Power</b> Working conditions; Lack of role clarity; Lack of voice; Ownership of space; Lack of involvement in whole school systems; Lack of support; Seeking status; Age; Battlefield.
		<b>Communication</b>
		<b>Relationship and Conflicts with Teachers</b>
		<b>Children and Respect</b>
		<b>Conflict with Parents</b>
		<b>Responsibility and Blame</b>
		<b>Time</b> Practical tasks; Time to reflect.
	Strengthen	<b>Joy and Motivation</b>
		<b>Demanding Role</b>
		<b>Skilled and Reflective Practitioners</b>
		<b>Supportive Team</b>
		<b>Shared Lunchtime Culture</b> Children's culture; Supervisors' culture; Children read supervisors; Shared lunchtime culture; Shared lunchtime culture challenges.
		<b>Knowing Children and Developing Relationships with Children</b>
		<b>Management of Behaviour</b>
		<b>Ownership of Lunchtime</b>
<u>Primary Theme</u>	<u>Secondary Themes</u>	<u>Tertiary Themes</u>
Children's Agency and Autonomy	Challenge	<b>Assumptions</b> Age; Gender; Family; Past experiences.
		<b>Dominance of Football</b>
		<b>Restrictions to Play</b>
		<b>Facilities</b>
		<b>Safety and Risk</b>
	Strengthen	<b>Happiness</b>
		<b>Self-esteem</b>
		<b>Voice of the Child</b>
		<b>Social Development</b>
		<b>Play</b>
		<b>Learning through Play</b>
		<b>Space</b>
		<b>Safety and Risk</b>
		<b>Facilitate and Nurture</b>

An account of the lunchtime story themes presented in Table 2 will now be given.

#### **5.4 An Account of the Lunchtime Themes**

In presenting the results the intention will be to convey the interesting and essential meanings of the supervisors' lunchtime story. To enable this an account of each theme will be given supported by verbatim extracts. The results include descriptive observations in addition to more interpretative comments as explored through the Reflective Diary (Appendix 1).

The account of the results of the analysis will be considered alongside reference to existing research into the area of lunchtimes as explored in the background literature review (Chapter 2).

##### **5.4.1 Primary Story Theme: Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency**

Significantly supervisors' experiences are connected to the children that they supervise during lunchtime. The story that they shared in this study has considerable focus on children. However, this study isn't just about supervisors' views on how children experience lunchtimes.

Analysis of the interviews was enriched through significant reflection within the Reflective Diary. This brought about my underlying inference that supervisors' views about lunchtime are significantly underpinned by how they feel about themselves and their own autonomy and agency. Autonomy is arguably about personal independence and self-sufficiency. Agency entails having the ability to control events rather than others determining what you do and who you are.

The supervisors implied that at lunchtime they would need to be able to take independent control of lunchtimes to be effective supervisors. These views seemed to relate to their apparent belief that lunchtime opportunities support

children to achieve some level of autonomy and agency. Children achieving autonomy and agency through play at lunchtime was discussed in the account of the background literature review (Davies, 1982; Davies, 1993; Ota et. al., 1997; Broadhead, 2008). In this present study the supervisors implied that an effective supervisor would be able to facilitate children's autonomy and agency during lunchtime.

Therefore the supervisors' autonomy and agency was identified as a primary theme in the supervisors' lunchtime story. The supervisors' story about lunchtime reflected various challenges to their autonomy and agency. It also reflected features that strengthen their autonomy and agency. The following sections will explore these secondary themes of challenges and features that strengthen.

#### **5.4.1a Secondary Theme: Challenges to Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency**

My understanding of the supervisors' description of their lunchtime experiences suggests that in trying to attain autonomy and agency during lunchtime the supervisors claim to be faced with certain challenges. These challenges will be detailed as tertiary themes.

#### **Tertiary Theme: Self-esteem** (Challenge to Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

In sharing their lunchtime story through the interviews supervisors did not explicitly talk about their self-esteem during either interview. In sharing their lunchtime story they did however express views which I interpreted as being related to self-esteem. As this study is about the supervisors this account of their story begins with an exploration of their self-esteem. There will be particular

reference to self-esteem issues that challenge the supervisors' autonomy and agency.

### Personal feelings

During the interviews supervisors occasionally expressed feelings that suggested frustration and dissatisfaction about their role as a supervisor.

*'...I get cross...'. Interview 1/Line 993*

*'Yeah I get annoyed sometimes...'. Interview 1/Line 1263*

*'...feelings of dread...'. Interview 1/Line 1588*

*'...there is days when I must admit I think, what are you doing here...'. Interview 1/Line 1629*

Supervisors appear to lack confidence but are aware that they make negative comments about themselves.

*'We should be more careful not to put ourselves down'. Interview 2/Line 87*

I believe that such feelings are likely to impact on their self-esteem.

### Qualifications and experience

Details about supervisors' educational experiences and qualifications were not sought though they did make some reference to a lack of formal qualifications. This may impact on supervisors' self-esteem. Later though they express confidence in their own competencies.

*'I think I've come on since I starting doing this. To be honest if I can manage this lot I can manage just about any sort of job. Working in a class as an assistant well it'd be dead easy after this'. Interview 1/Line 538*

This concern about qualifications relates to a piece of research quoted in the background literature review in which it was stated that supervisors did not see themselves as, 'educationalists' (Ross and Ryan, 1994). Low self-esteem may be connected to a lack of confidence in their skills. In this study supervisors did actually describe a lot of their work as being about teaching and facilitating children's learning (quotes related to this are presented in later themes).

#### Offer and acceptance of the position

Rather than feeling they had been specially recruited because they presented with essential and desirable attributes to be an effective supervisor, the position of supervisor was apparently offered on the basis of convenience to the school.

*'I was asked if there was any parents....who would come in at 5 minutes notice if any of the regulars were off...then I was asked to help one to one ...and when that child left there was a vacancy so I stopped'. Interview 1/Line 405*

*'It's handy though...do not suppose any of us...dream of being a dinner lady. But you kinda fall into it'. Interview 1/Line 418*

Supervisors were perhaps not able to experience a sense of achievement in applying for and attaining a position as a supervisor.

*'I didn't even get an interview like. I think they were just so pleased to get somebody to do the job'. Interview 2/Line 77*

When sharing their experiences of being offered the role of supervisor at the school, and their reasons for accepting it, supervisors explain about convenience.

*'For us mothers it's a great job because it fits in. It's only that hour or so and it's a bit of pocket money and it fits in with the children'. Interview 1/Line 426*

However, when telling their lunchtime story supervisors in this study share an enjoyment of their role and a pleasure about being with children. They also think that they have a valuable role. This will be discussed later.

*'We could always go somewhere else if wanted to, if it got that bad'. Interview 1/Line 507*

They may claim to have a choice but if convenience is a factor they may not actually have alternative options. Though they talk about this I wonder if the supervisors have a sense of being trapped in the job.

#### Attributes they value

In understanding their story I thought that the lack of qualifications was not a significant issue for supervisors, certainly in terms of being able to be an effective supervisor. They do however express an appreciation of certain personal qualities and skills that are helpful. Supervisors appear to be confident that they possess such skills (this will be discussed more fully in a later section). Of interest, in terms of supervisors' self-esteem and identity, are some of the attributes that they value in children. For instance at different points in both interviews supervisors talk of the value of being 'helpful', an attribute they appreciate and reward in children.

*'They like to feel they're helping don't they?'. Interview 2/Line 770*

Supervisors present themselves as busy people who are there to help children. Perhaps by rewarding children who are 'helpful' they are by association rewarding themselves.



## Being needed

I detect vulnerability to supervisors' self-esteem in the way in which they talk about wanting to be needed by the school and by the children.

*'Ar they must like us'. Interview 1/Line 470*

*'...I thrive on that. I love it'. Interview 1/Line 863*

It seems that supervisors' identity is closely associated to somebody who is needed and helpful. I have the impression that being needed appears to boost their esteem.

## Unappreciated

Whilst supervisors want to feel needed their vulnerable self-esteem is further demonstrated by my understanding of their need to feel appreciated by school staff. Their comments imply that that school staff do not appreciate them.

*'Well I don't think they know how hard it can be for us, or if they do they never say'. Interview 1/Line 491*

*'No, I don't think they appreciate us. I think sometimes they think we're just a nuisance...'. Interview 1/Line 493*

*'...but we don't get told we've done a good job either...'. Interview 2/Line 81*

## Tertiary Theme: Status and Power (Challenge to Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

This account of the supervisors' story begins with their personal feelings which allude to a lack of self-esteem. Prior to initiating this research I had made an assumption that supervisors would probably consider their status to be poor. I

also thought that they may consider themselves to have limited powers. When sharing their story through the interviews supervisors confirmed my assumptions.

### Working Conditions

One of the challenges that supervisors face are the poor working conditions. The pay reward for being a lunchtime supervisor is poor. Supervisors seem disappointed in the rate of pay but express awareness that other factors must be motivating.

*'The pay isn't brilliant but you know what you're getting when you take it. So there must be something about the job that we like, cos it isn't the money'.*

*Interview 1/Line 1655*

They say that some days are particularly challenging and generally it is a physically demanding role.

*'...you feel like hanging your pinny up because they are horrible...'. Interview 1/Line 438*

*'...spinning plates at the same time... sometimes they crash to the floor'.*  
*Interview 1/Line 466*

*'It can be exhausting that's for sure'. Interview 1/Line 468*

Short working hours and school holidays are a positive feature to the job. Although supervisors present this as an advantage to their role they imply a feeling of being trapped as they say:

*'You get away after an hour'. Interview 1/Line 445*

The sheer number of children to supervise is another challenge.

*'...the children were a bit scary at first because there was a lot of them together'. Interview/Line 1480*

Supervisors have no place to store personal belongings or to get refreshments. Having nowhere to conduct confidential conversations seems to constitute a challenge that further undermines their autonomy and agency.

*'I was thinking it's not right really is it? I mean anybody could walk by and hear...'. Interview 2/Line 22*

In sharing their story the supervisors seem to be conveying awareness that their poor working conditions undermine their status within school.

#### Lack of role clarity

Supervisors believe that they are responsible for lunchtimes.

*'...we're the adults. We get paid to do the job'. Interview 2/Line 1137*

The role of the lunchtime supervisor was explored within the background literature and I considered guidance on this to be limited. It was unsurprising therefore to find a similar lack of clarity in this study. Arguably, lack of guidance is a contributory factor in supervisors' perceived status and power within the school.

*'What job description? I've never seen one'. Interview 2/Line 64*

When asked if there had been opportunity to talk with the Head about the expectations of a supervisor they recalled:

*'...to some extent. But I think it was just about making sure the dinners go through quickly and making sure there was no fights. Use your common sense really'. Interview 2/Line 71*

Supervisors talk about the expectations of teachers in a way that suggests they perceive a lack of interest in their role. I understand this to exacerbate their feeling of low status and limited powers.

*'I think if you asked the teachers....I don't think they think too much about it to be honest. As long as we keep the kids out of their hair they're happy'.*

*Interview 1/Line 221*

They feel that the Head doesn't have time for them:

*'...it's not high on her list of priorities. ...Maybe she thinks we get paid...so should sort it'. Interview 2/Line 1100*

*'We would if we had permission'. Interview 2/Line 1103*

*'When I've done something off my own bat I've been told off about it'.*

*Interview 2/Line 1104*

The comments about 'permission' and 'being told off' convey a perception that supervisors have of their low status and limited powers. More generally, the perceived lack of thought from teachers conveys messages about the supervisory role as being unimportant. Supervisors seem to feel that they are not valued beyond keeping children out of the way of teachers at lunchtime. This is the supervisors' career. It is a role that they enjoy. They consider that they can have some impact on children's development. Supervisors may therefore feel disappointed and frustrated with the teachers' apparent lack of interest. A possible consequence of this disappointment is that supervisors' perceptions of teachers could be affected.

In the background literature an idea was introduced about children playing what they, '*should play*'. Likewise it is possible that supervisors are so unsure about

what their role is and what others expect of them that they are concerned with trying to be what they *think* the teachers and parents think they 'should' be.

*'I always think you have to look busy'. Interview 2/Line 838*

*'Well you never know who's watching do you?'. Interview 2/Line 840*

Comments such as these imply a feeling of being judged by others in school. The lack of certainty about their role brings with it a lack of confidence in what powers they would be expected to have. They say:

*'...we're not quite teachers and we're not quite parents but we're a bit of both...'. Interview 2/Line 148*

*'We're in-betweenies'. Interview 2/Line 155*

### Lack of voice

In the background literature it was recognised that when people have a vested interest in a topic there is likely to be some harmony between their attitudes and behaviours (Boulton, 1996). It would seem wise therefore to seek the views of supervisors on lunchtime matters. As supervisors comment:

*'...it's us that's out there...We know what goes on, we know where the problems are, we have an idea as to what might work'. Interview 2/Line 782*

In sharing their story in this study supervisors are expressing significant feelings of disquiet. They are unsure about their role and they are unsure about what is expected of them.

Some of their conversation suggests to me that they do not question such uncertainty because they lack the confidence to speak up and feel that they lack a voice. They also imply that they have not previously been asked for their views

so their experience is limited. When they have attempted to share their views supervisors believe that they have not been taken account of.

*'It's surprising isn't it, when you get started there's so much to say. I didn't realise just how much we did'. Interview 1/Line 1895*

*'But we've said things in the past and nothing happens so you just get disheartened'. Interview 2/Line 258*

They have a positive experience of making a change to the rota but appear to be unable to build on this, perhaps through lack of confidence. The rota is one aspect of the lunchtime that they feel has been within their control. They refer to the rota often during the interviews.

*'...we sorted out a rota between ourselves...Head thought it was a good idea'. Interview 2/Line 263*

I detect a somewhat apathetic acceptance that having asked for something it is reasonable not to have been informed of the outcome. Similarly there is a defeatist tone that their suggestions will not be followed. It seems that supervisors consider they lack control and ownership of what is happening at lunchtimes.

Certainly when talking about communication and conflict with teachers they feel that involvement should come from the teachers and the Head.

*'We don't have the confidence to deal with things ourselves'. Interview 2/Line 1085*

*'Aye but I think that should come from the Head and the staff really. They should try to involve us more. We're on the same team for goodness sake'.*

*Interview 1/Line 785*

*'Well we've tried talking to the Head but she doesn't have the time or makes promises but nothing happens'. Interview 2/Line 1095*

Supervisors express a belief that it is fruitless to try to improve joint working with the teachers. However, feeling powerless to improve collaboration they are keen to try again.

*'We should speak up more'. Interview 2/Line 1090*

The supervisors suggest a willingness to try to consult with the Head. However, they express a general feeling that their voice is not heard within the school system. This challenges their autonomy and agency.

### Ownership of space

Supervisors' working conditions are such that they do not have a dedicated place. Supervisors are uncomfortable about entering the staffroom. Perhaps they do not feel that they are part of the, 'staff'.

*'I mean we don't even feel comfortable going into the staffroom for a cuppa. No, even though they said we could, but they all look at you like you shouldn't be there'. Interview1/Line 770*

The view being expressed here is that they consider the staffroom to be the domain of the teachers. The teachers 'own' the staffroom space. Ownership ascribes status and power. Supervisors do not 'own' an equivalent space within the school. Instead supervisors have to resort to conversing in the school

entrance lobby. I consider this to convey powerful messages about who is valued and respected in school.

### Lack of involvement in whole school systems

The supervisors' story includes elements about whole school systems of which they claim to have limited knowledge. Supervisors feel uninvolved.

*'No, they don't ask us about what systems work at lunchtime or anything'.*

*Interview 1/Line 777*

*'They don't even tell us when they've changed something that we should know'. Interview 1/Line 779*

Their status and power within school is further undermined by whole school reward systems. When asked about their involvement they imply an inconsistency.

*'We sometimes give them lunchtime stickers'. Interview 1/Line 1082*

They seem to want involvement in rewarding children.

*'...we could look more at rewarding the children'. Interview 2/Line 1050*

Similarly they feel uninvolved in sanctions. In any case they are concerned about the lack of impact sanctions have, which reflects on their status and power.

*'I don't know why we bother to send kids in. They're nice and warm. The secretary talks to them and then nothing happens'. Interview 2/Line 1127*

As with rewards they'd like to be more involved in sanctions.

*'I think we should be able to take action as well'. Interview 2/Line 1051*



My understanding of the supervisors' experiences is that they feel uninvolved in whole school systems. This seems to mean that they cannot demonstrate their status and power and thus their autonomy and agency is compromised.

#### Lack of support for them

The sense that I am trying to make of the supervisors' story suggests that they perceive a lack of support from teachers.

*'They need to support us to do our job'. Interview 1/Line 213*

However their low self-esteem and poor status perhaps leads them to expect limited support.

*'But we're the ones getting paid to get on with it'. Interview 1/Line 215*

As well as experiencing a lack of support, supervisors also feel that their status is demeaned by some of the teachers' behaviours. For instance when the whistle is blown for children to line up, teachers can be delayed coming out.

*'...we have to stand and wait for the teachers...'. Interview 2/Line 1036*

*'It's like keeping bees still in a line...some of them wander off...'. Interview 2/Line 1038*

Having to wait could be interpreted as a sign that they are less important in the school than teachers. Supervisors also worried about the impression given when teachers saw that children were out of their line. They express a concern that it reflects poorly on their control.

## Seeking status

I have interpreted the supervisors' story as conveying a sense of poor status and power within the complex interacting school system. I also detected that there may be some attempt to gain status and power within the team of supervisors. This relates specifically to the position of, 'senior lunchtime supervisor'.

The senior claims some responsibility for the appointment of the other supervisors.

*'I got them all in'. Interview 1/Line 413*

She claims to be 'in charge' and believes that the children know this and treat her differently.

*'They all know that I'm in charge so to speak, so what they do is they wind these lot up, but with me they don't'. Interview 1/Line 620*

Also, the senior's story differs slightly from the other supervisors in that her status occasionally means that other school staff keep her informed.

*'I do, I think with being senior'. Interview 1/Line 1050*

The senior also makes statements about her intention to organise the team

*'I'll swap us around again so we get to know more of the children'. Interview 1/Line 1108*

However the others are confident in questioning the senior's suggestion.

Furthermore, when talking with the group I did not distinguish an overt hierarchy.

Maybe the title of, 'senior', has more value when talking to others outside of the team, such as the researcher, teachers, Head and Governors.

## Age

Supervisors seem concerned with the age of a child. The supervisors' story implies that with younger children they feel more needed and able to nurture. This may have connotations of power. The older children however challenge supervisors' status and do not seem to need supervisors as much. Linked to age is the physicality of being young and smaller and supervisors use language to convey messages about vulnerability.

*'He was only little'. Interview 1/Line 1680*

*'Her little face...'. Interview 1/Line 1685*

This idea of bigger, stronger adults who are caring but powerful is confirmed through the repeated use of the term, *'Bless them'* (for example at Interview 1/Line 849).

The relationships with older children are different too. The older children have different needs and interests. Earlier I suggested that supervisors had a desire to be needed. The older children's apparent lack of need of them may rankle.

*'I've got no relationship with them. It's a Year 5 class and they don't want to know'. Interview 1/Line 1100*

They use the 'threat' of a cuddle to curb the behaviour of older children, giving the impression that having a cuddle is somehow silly or a punishment.

*'...if they're being silly like, "Do you want a cuddle?" It soon stops them'. Interview 2/Line 136*

They do however like to see how children change over time as they mature. They realise that children need to have some resilience to cope with secondary school.

*'...and that's great cos they need to be like that when they move up to big school'. Interview 1/Line 134*

Issues around the age of the child present a complex picture. Supervisors want the children to develop and become independent. However, in doing this the older children's interests, needs and independence challenge the very things that supervisors value or wish to protect, such as their status and power.

### **Battlefield**

Later, supervisors' views on positive relationships with children and supervisors' nurturing role will be explored. Inconsistent with these views are the references to the playground as being akin to a 'battlefield'. They claim to have to engage in a battle for ownership. The battlefield analogy is perhaps associated with supervisors' self-esteem and perceptions of limited status and power.

*'...on the playground it can be every man for himself'. Interview 1/Line 548*

*'It's like go,go,go. It's a military exercise really'. Interview 1/Line 561*

*'...so we're one step ahead...'. Interview 1/Line 623*

### **Tertiary Theme: Communication** *(Challenge to Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)*

The supervisors' conversation implies that they consider consultation, collaboration and communication with the Head and teachers to be inconsistent. They are unclear about what the Head and teachers think is the purpose of lunchtimes. They seem uncertain about the expectations they have of

supervisors and the detail of their role. Supervisors also suggest they do not have opportunity to share their views. During the interview they recognise the need to be more assertive in improving communication but feel disheartened by previous experiences when they have tried to address this and little has changed. I would propose that the combination of such concerns is likely to undermine their personal autonomy and agency. This in turn may impact on how well they are able to support children to develop their autonomy and agency.

For instance supervisors said communication is:

*'...one of the biggest bug bears...'. Interview 1/Line 768*

Supervisors assert that communication and collaborative working with the Head and teachers could be an effective way of managing lunchtimes.

*'...if the teacher listened and said the right things it looked better. It looked to the children like we were working together and sometimes it did make a difference'. Interview 1/Line 761*

But supervisors claim that there is little opportunity to work collaboratively.

*'No, not really, it's us on our own'. Interview 1/Line 767*

Supervisors spend time with children every day. They profess to a commitment to considering the needs of individual children. Later supervisors' views on their unique relationship with children will be examined. From this perspective it is understandable that they would like to be informed about significant issues related to individual children. They wish for a consistent communication system. The supervisors' perceptions on communication lead me to conclude that they consider it to be a barrier to being able to do their job well. This in turn probably impacts on their self-esteem, status and power.

*'Well we've said about communication. If that was improved it would make things easier'. Interview 1/Line 1131*

Communication is a two way process but supervisors talk about their concerns as though they feel it is others, and not them, who are responsible for the communication problem. Some of the anecdotes that they share about poor communication include for instance:

*'Often we're in a bit of a fog about things. Who do we refer to? Who's in charge? It's about communication isn't it?'. Interview 1/Line 1247*

*'...nobody has told you that they are going swimming or to a pantomime or certain things like that...'. Interview 1/Line 1267*

In these situations I consider it to be reasonable of supervisors to expect that teaching staff would take the initiative to communicate what is happening. I must therefore assume that the supervisors' angst about poor communication has some foundation. It is not clear though why supervisors do not challenge this issue, particularly as they realise more efficient communication could improve lunchtimes. However, in the supervisors' story they explain that they were to have regular meetings with the Head.

*'...but that's the Head as well y'see she's busy'. Interview 1/Line 1218*

*'Yeah but I sometimes wonder what's the point'. Interview 1/Line 1564*

These comments hint at supervisors feeling disappointed and dispirited.

Furthermore, supervisors appear to declare a lack of right to access to better communication, support and collaborative working practices.

*'But then that's what we get paid for isn't it?'. Interview 1/Line499*

Poor communication was one of the, 'lacks', identified in the background literature (Docking 1988). My experience of working with supervisors had also identified communication as a problem. The supervisors in this study share a story that contains a depth of feeling about poor communication. Interpretation of their story alludes to the powerful impact poor communication has on supervisors' self-esteem and perceived status and power. Additionally the supervisors consider that it impacts on how well they are able to be effective in their role.

In apparently wanting to be effective they offer an insightful response to a query about training. They say that they need:

*'...something with teachers so we can kind of spell out what we do and just sort out what they expect of us'. Interview 1/Line 1554*

*'And what we expect of them as well'. Interview 1/Line 1557*

This is about working collaboratively, being clear about expectations and communication. The background literature suggested that a positive school ethos depends on shared values as well as clear procedures (Ross and Ryan, 1994). Supervisors in this study confer with such notions.

The difficulty in sustaining meetings with the Head comes up again later, they say:

*'Maybe we should take the stand on that, get something going again'.*

*Interview 1/Line 1562*

Supervisors realise they could be more assertive in accepting responsibility for improving communication. 'Take the stand' is a phrase that gives a visual image

of somebody immovable, resolute, determined. Maybe they are saying they haven't been like that before but need to be.

*'...we need to get together to decide what we want first. A united front so to speak...we need to stand up for ourselves more'. Interview 2/Line 1146*

The supervisors express significant concerns about communication in the school. They suggest that improved communication would enhance their autonomy and agency.

**Tertiary Theme: Relationship and Conflict with Teachers** (Challenge to Supervisors'

Autonomy and Agency)

The supervisors' story of lunchtime denotes a feeling of disappointment in the teachers' lack of attention to their role. This is compounded through poor communication systems. I have suggested that this undermines supervisors' self-esteem, status and feeling of power within the school. These factors also seem to influence their relationship with teachers. The supervisors' story appears to be purporting that the relationship they have with teachers challenges supervisors' autonomy and agency. There is for instance a desire to please teachers and to present a cheerful persona.

*'Aye and one of the challenges is to try to seem happy cos they don't need to look at our miserable faces every day. Sometimes you have to paint on the smile'. Interview 1/Lines 500 and 503*

They express something akin to a fear of displeasing teachers.

*'Now, watch, don't let Mrs B. hear you say that'. Interview 1/Line 403*



The way that supervisors talk of their relationship with teachers contains some contradictions too. I am uncertain if this signifies an attempt to convince themselves to think more positively of the relationship they have with teachers. For instance, they argue that they get involved in everything with the teachers.

*'I think the teachers don't treat us any different. We are like part of the school'. Interview 1/Line 1143*

Yet earlier they had admitted that they did not feel comfortable going into the staff room for a drink. Furthermore they claim:

*'Well it's because we're not really treated as part of the staff, are we? We just come in, do the hour, and go out'. Interview 1/Line 774*

They say of the teachers:

*'They are very open and approachable'. Interview 1/Line 1150*

Yet earlier they had said that:

*'... but sometimes it would be good if when you went to get some support they didn't huff and puff like. They need to support us to do our job'. Interview 1/Line 211*

They claim that:

*'They ask for our advice'. Interview 1/Line 1152*

Followed by:

*'They don't ask us for our advice but they do approach us in different situations'. Interview 1/Line 1155*

Supervisors recount incidents when they considered that their advice had been sought. However, the situations that they described are about the teachers asking supervisors to be vigilant as a problem with an individual was anticipated. Similarly in thinking about how they and the teachers work together supervisors ascribe themselves a relatively menial role in joint working.

*'They do work with us though. We blow the whistle but the teachers are more authoritarian, they have the authority, more than we do, to get the kids, especially the older ones'. Interview 1/Line 1161*

This statement also demonstrates how supervisors consider that teachers have more 'authority' than they do.

*'...they're better at getting the kids to line up than we are'. Interview 1/Line 1160*

What isn't clear here is whether teachers being better at getting the children to line up is actually about the 'authority' they have. Alternatively it may be about lack of clarity over supervisors' role, particularly when a teacher is present.

Another interpretation on their views of the teachers' authority could be about the children's perceptions of the hierarchy. Importantly though, the supervisors' story communicates their concerns about their status when compared to the teachers status.

Perhaps linked to feeling inferior to teachers, some comments express frustration.

*'I don't know really sometimes I get frustrated that the teachers say we're in charge at lunchtime but then they make up the rules as they go along'. Interview 1/Line 986*

In the literature review it was suggested that adults are only called into the child's world when things become unmanageable (Sluckin, 1981; Davies, 1982).

Supervisors in this study feel more strongly about this. They think that teachers do not want to be concerned with events at lunchtime and expect supervisors to manage this on their own.

*'...they want things to go smoothly on a lunchtime so they don't have to get involved'. Interview 1/Line 207*

*'They leave it to us and say, "It's not my concern at this time. Go and see a dinner lady". Interview 1/Line 1764*

Supervisors take opportunities to try to diminish the skills of teachers, as though perhaps this makes them feel better about themselves.

*'I don't think I'd like to be in a class with a teacher in charge. I couldn't keep my mouth shut'. Interview 1/Line 567*

Supervisors feel they have a relationship with teachers that is fraught with conflict.

### **Tertiary Theme: Children and Respect** (Challenge to Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

In discussing their relationship with children, supervisors highlighted that they perceive themselves to be different to teachers. Also, they consider that the children respond differently to them. There is a sense of resignation that the children are, 'pushing boundaries' with supervisors.

*'Pushing boundaries, seeing how far they can push things, and us'. Interview 1/Line 365*

*'...they might not respect us the same. Might not listen as well. Might not behave for us as they do for their teachers'. Interview 1/Line 971*

*'...they can be quite rude to us sometimes, the way they talk and argue back. Sometimes they even ignore us...but they wouldn't do that to a teacher'. Interview 1/Line 1321*

Thus, not only do supervisors feel that their status and power within school is compromised by the attitude of teachers they appear to feel this is exacerbated by the children.

### **Tertiary Theme: Conflict with Parents** (Challenge to Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

In the supervisors' story they express a feeling of being undermined, misunderstood and unappreciated by parents. They believe that parents have limited understanding of their role. They also state that parents are quick to blame supervisors when problems arise.

*'...when there's a problem we soon get to hear what they think we should and shouldn't have done'. Interview 1/Line 264*

*'But I guess they want their kids to play nicely like. To have a good time. They like to think of their child with a lovely big smile, running around, getting on with everybody and having a high old time'. Interview 1/Line 270*

*'I don't know if the mams and dads realise though that when the children are playing they are learning as well'. Interview 1/Line 273*

Supervisors consider that the role of a supervisor is a challenging one, but they argue that parents do not realise how challenging it is.

*'...and a couple of mums that have been in relieving and they said... they*

*didn't realise what a difficult job it is'. Interview 1/Line 1423*

They make some remarks about parents assuming that their children are innocent of misbehaviour.

*'If only they could see what some of their treasures get up to sometimes...'*

*Interview 1/Line 325*

Supervisors purport that parents have a romantic view of what they want lunchtimes to be about, linked to their own memories. In trying to make sense of the supervisors trying to make sense of their lunchtime experiences I think that supervisors are suggesting parents do not realise that play and learning are related. They appear to claim that parents do not know what their children are really like.

I have construed such comments to evidence supervisors' feelings of being in a privileged position to better understand what lunchtimes are about and how children behave at this time. They seem to believe they are more informed than parents. They express a feeling of being unappreciated for the contribution they make to children's development.

Moreover the way they talk about their views on parents suggests that there may be a battle for control and influence over the children. Supervisors are conscious of parental power.

*'I don't think they respect us like they would with a teacher'. Interview 1/Line 1419*

*'We're up against the parents sometimes as well'. Interview 1/Line 1733*

Supervisors state they would appreciate support from parents.

*'I'd like them to tell their kids off if we have, just like we used to get from our dads'. Interview 1/Line 1745*

When asked if the miracle happened how things with parents would be different, supervisors replied:

*'They'd leave us to get on with our jobs'. Interview 1/Line 1743*

In making sense of the supervisors' account of their lunchtime experiences I have interpreted their views about parents as undermining their autonomy and agency.

**Tertiary Theme: Responsibility and Blame** (Challenge to Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

Supervisors have expressed a wish for parents to leave them to get on with the job of supervising as they see fit. They also want support from teachers, but want the status and power to manage lunchtimes. Although I think supervisors desire this autonomy they seem sensitive to the responsibility for ensuring that children are safe. They express anxiety over the potential for being blamed should a problem occur. This curbs some of their desire for autonomy.

*'We can't be everywhere all of the time...'. Interview 1/Line 251*

They clearly feel responsible for troubling teachers if there is a problem at lunchtime.

*'I think sometimes they must think we're just a nuisance because we bring problems to them'. Interview 1/Lines 493*

This may restrict supervisors in seeking support for fear of being seen to be a nuisance. Possibly of course supervisors take issues to teachers which they might reasonably have been expected to have resolved themselves. This raises

questions over why supervisors might not feel able to deal with some lunchtime issues. Possibly supervisors perceive their powers to be limited. Maybe they lack confidence. The lack of role clarity may result in confusion over responsibility. Certainly supervisors occasionally seek to pass on a problem.

*'...we refer things up...' Interview 1/Line 1012*

What they possibly mean by this is that they pass on responsibility – it's not said that they seek advice, or solve a problem together. They refer, 'up'. Further this gives the impression that they consider themselves to be at a lower level within the school hierarchy.

As discussed earlier, another tension for supervisors lies in their understanding of what parents want of them. It was suggested that parents transfer a sense of responsibility for the welfare of children to supervisors.

*'...they want us to keep their little bundles of treasure safe, that's what they want'. Interview 1/Line 320*

Supervisors worry about being blamed should a child be at risk or hurt. For instance when expressing a concern that children cannot play in the bushes for fear they may get hurt, supervisors suggest that parents should:

*'...sign something to say if they have played in the bushes and they've poked their eye out, it's not our fault'. Interview 1/Line 721*

An additional challenge for supervisors is that they believe some element of risk is helpful in a child's development.

*'We are too soft with kids now. I think a bit of risk is good for children. They need to try walking along a thin beam to get their balance. And if they fall off they learn how to do it better next time'. Interview 1/Line 331*

*'Enjoy life and take a bit risk, that's what I say. It's what life is about'.*

*Interview 1/Line 339*

So, on the one hand supervisors accept the responsibility for children's safety at lunchtime whilst on the other hand they do not want to be blamed should there be an accident. They also value the role that risk plays in a child's development. They seem to be encouraging some degree of risk within a relatively safe context. Tension seems arise from the supervisors' general abhorrence for over-protection with an awareness of the expectations of others to keep children safe.

### **Tertiary Theme: Time** (Challenge to Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

Supervisors' autonomy and agency is further challenged by tensions emerging from time. They say that there are a lot of practical tasks to be done in a short time. Supervisors want to be reflective in their practice but say they usually find little time to think.

When asked about what their job involves supervisors' immediate reaction is:

*'Oh where do we start?'. Interview 1/Line 179*

This gives a strong verbal message that the list is very long. They go on to talk about the many chores that they have, for instance:

*'... collecting them from class, lining them up, seeing to them in the hall, tidying up with them'. Interview 1/Line 179*

*'We talk to them, and listen of course'. Interview 1/Line 199*



*'...help children to enjoy their lunch and look after them when they play'.*

*Interview 2/Line 880*

*'...teach...which hand to put the knife in and how to cut things up'. Interview*

*2/Line 882*

But they say:

*'...don't think anyone realises...how much time we spend positive like with the kids'. Interview 2/Line 1213*

*'It's not just about chivvyng them into the dining hall and telling them off.*

*There's a lot more that we do and it's hard to explain. You have to see it really'. Interview 2/Line 1214*

The supervisors' story is one of acceptance and simply getting on with the practical duties. The supervisors present as grounded individuals who see that a job needs doing and so do it. But, they feel the practical tasks impact on their autonomy and agency because they have so much to do they have to do it without thinking.

*'I think that's it, you do it, you do it all. And don't even think too much about it'. Interview 1/Line 481*

An alternative interpretation of the responsibility to perform so many practical duties is that it instils some power in supervisors. They have the power to help children or instruct them. The supervisor is an essential player in children's lunchtime experiences and this could have a positive impact on the esteem of supervisors. Possibly, the supervisors haven't yet internalised how dependant on them the school and the children are.

A consequence of being so busy is limited time to reflect on the role of supervisor.

*'I've never given that much thought'. Interview 1/Line 263*

*'I hadn't thought of that'. Interview 2/Line 312*

*'We don't have time to turn around sometimes'. Interview 2/Line 550*

Yet supervisors argue that to be an effective supervisor you must take time to reflect. Even though there is a lot to do a supervisor needs to be aware of what is happening at lunchtime.

*'...we have all these things to do, everything to deal with, and we've got to have a handle on what's going on everywhere and know how to handle it all. We can't just rush in like a headless chicken. You've got to think all the time'.*

*Interview 1/Line 685*

*'If you have the time to talk and think then you can think of all sorts of different ways of doing the same thing'. Interview 2/Line 1244*

Supervisors believe that time to think is as valuable as fulfilling a raft of practical duties.

*'When I first started I think I thought I always had to always look busy so I'd be rushing about doing this and that. But have learned now. It's okay sometimes to just stand and keep an eye out'. Interview 1/Line 1517*

Supervisors believe that being able to be more reflective would make them more effective supervisors.

## **Summary of Challenges to Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency**

In their endeavours to be effective supervisors seek to be autonomous at lunchtimes. They seem to want to have the power to make decisions about lunchtimes. However, in making sense of their story, I have interpreted the supervisors' comments to suggest that there are various challenges that interfere with their ability to be autonomous. Such challenges begin with their self-esteem and feelings about their low status in school and lack of power. These feelings are compounded by poor communications systems within school. There seem to be underlying tensions in the supervisors' relationships with teachers, parents and children. An element of this tension is supervisors' concern about blame which conflicts with their belief that a degree of measured risk is helpful in children's development. Lunchtime necessitates a long list of practical duties which place demands on supervisor time. These time demands present as a barrier to supervisors being able to be reflective in their practice.

My interpretation of the supervisors' story is that these factors present as challenges to their autonomy and agency.

### **5.4.1b Secondary Theme: Strengthen Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency**

Alongside factors that challenge I have understood the supervisors' story to incorporate factors that they perceive to promote their lunchtime autonomy and agency. The lunchtime features that strengthen supervisors' autonomy and agency will now be presented as tertiary themes.

#### **Tertiary Theme: Joy and Motivation** (Strengthens Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

This account of the supervisors' story about lunchtime begins with an exploration of challenges and conflicts that supervisors seem to experience. This

immediately raises questions about why supervisors would choose to continue to perform a role that further undermines their vulnerable self-esteem.

An unanticipated aspect of the supervisors' lunchtime story was the simple joy of being with children which to some extent appears to redress the concerns supervisors have about lunchtimes. This joy underpins supervisors' motivation which supports them to have a sense of autonomy and agency.

*'I like to see that'. Interview 1/Line86*

*'It's lovely to see'. Interview 1/Line 106*

*'And them's the best bits. It's what makes you keep coming'. Interview 2/Line 1218*

*'Children are a treasure...The things they come out with. The excitement they have for life...'. Interview 2/Line 1220*

Comments such as these communicate something about the supervisors' pleasure. There seems to be some joy in being able to observe children's enjoyment. In their story of lunchtime supervisors describe how children attempt to draw supervisors into their childhood world.

*'And they look to us to play with them sometimes. They like that don't they, even the older ones sometimes. They like us to join in with them. It's nice really. Makes your realise the job's worthwhile after all when they do that'. Interview 1/Line 389*

This comment connects to supervisors wanting to feel needed and appreciated. Earlier some of the supervisors' personal feelings were presented as challenges to their autonomy and agency. Conversely some of their personal feelings could

be assumed to inspire motivation and thus strengthen their autonomy and agency.

*'...I just love it'. Interview 1/Line 431*

*'I thrive on that. I love it'. Interview 1/Line 863*

*'Enjoy it'. Interview 1/Line 1578*

They also use humour which I think probably helps to diffuse concerns and strengthens bonds within the group.

*'We have a bit of a laugh...'. Interview 1/Line 798*

Autonomy and Agency is strengthened through the joy that motivates supervisors at lunchtime.

**Tertiary Theme: Demanding Role** (Strengthens Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

In their story supervisors celebrate the joy they experience through having opportunities to observe children and participate in aspects of their lunchtime play. The lunchtime though is not simply about passively enjoying being with children. Supervisors talk about how the role of supervisor can be demanding. They are however motivated and confident about meeting these demands.

*'It's very challenging. Yes it is. It is a bit. It's different. I like that about the job'.*

*Interview 1/Line 435*

*'It's an important job that we do'. Interview 1/Line 1661*

They seem to gain a sense of achievement from aspects of their role. The joy and the challenge of the role and the impact they can have on children's development motivates them.

and Agency)

Whilst joy and challenge provide the motivation more is needed to be able to be an effective lunchtime supervisor. In sharing their lunchtime story through the group interviews supervisors provide an account of themselves as skilled and reflective practitioners.

Confidence, or being able to give the impression of confidence, is pivotal. The sense that I have made of their story leads me to think that supervisors believe they need to communicate to the children that they are in charge.

*'Be confident. Know that you're in charge and that you know what you're doing. It'd be no good if the kids thought you didn't know what you were doing, even if you don't really'. Interview 1/Line 600*

Additionally supervisors say they have to be responsive, adaptable and reflective.

*'...have to think on our feet all the time'. Interview 1/Line 457*

*'...used to shout but I don't now cos I've learned that it doesn't work'. Interview 1/Line 1501*

Supervisors also believe that to be an effective supervisor you have to develop relationships with children and be empathic and sensitive.

*'...knowing the children, and we do need to, we need to be sensitive to how different they are and know how to be with them'. Interview 1/Line 668*

*'One thing you have to do is respect them'. Interview 1/Line 671*

Whilst being a confident, reflective and sensitive supervisor they are conscious of the different roles that they play during lunchtimes.

*'You're a referee, a mum and a doctor and an instigator. You're all these kind of things. You think about it there's a lot of trades mixed in there'. Interview 1/Line 653*

The supervisors appear to have experienced little or no formal training. They did not claim to have professional qualifications. Despite this the supervisors have an intuitive understanding of what skills are required. Supervisors imply that understanding develops with experience such that they have an insider's knowledge of the children's lunchtime world.

*'Aye but I think a lot of it we do, natural like, without thinking about it. A lot of it is gut feeling'. Interview 1/Line 485*

*'Experience too, you know what works and what doesn't'. Interview 1/Line 487*

*'...use your common sense'. Interview 2/Line 164*

This 'gut feeling' implies that being a supervisor might be something of a vocation but supervisors also value the skills that develop through the experience of being a parent.

*'I think this comes with parenting and you get to know the children'. Interview 1/Line 1366*

If intuition is the foundation of an autonomous and effective supervisor this would beg questions about the value of formal training. It is possible though that in the absence of training the supervisors have been compelled to rely on their own

store of personal resources. When asked specifically about training they seem sure that it would not help.

*'You learn on the job yourself'. Interview 1/Line 1526*

When asked about 'on the job' training' they agreed this would be useful, but would need to be on-going. They believe it would need to be delivered by somebody who understands the demands of the job. This may relate to their feeling of being unappreciated and the lack of role clarity.

*'I don't think until you've actually done this job that anybody can tell you what it's like or how to do it'. Interview 2/Line 521*

They identified that this would rely on the relationships within the team for it to be effective.

*'But we'd have to get on well, and trust each other'. Interview 2/Line 540*

Supervisors also presented as a reflective and flexible team. During the interview they exchange ideas about how things could be improved.

*'...we keep coming up with ideas about things we could do, and we could, couldn't we? ...a proper meeting to decide what we want...'. Interview 2/Line 1153*

*'It's like everything we do, we try this, it doesn't work, we try something else...'. Interview 2/Line 608*

Although supervisors consider themselves to be skilled practitioners they are concerned about having the skills to be able to manage some children. Together they question and explore the issues of behaviour management. There is a sense of really wanting to understand and a willingness to learn and to adapt.



*'...some do it better than others and I think we could all do with being reminded or maybe even learning something different'. Interview 2/Line 483*

What they did not talk about was any sort of appraisal or feedback process.

*'I don't think I've turned out too bad though. Well nobody has said anything to the contrary'. Interview 2/Line 79*

The supervisors present themselves as being skilled and reflective. They suggest that appropriate training and feedback arrangements would enhance their skills. The supervisors seem to feel that potentially they could be even more effective in the role.

**Tertiary Theme: Supportive Team** (Strengthens Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

Supervisors are aware of their own skills as individuals. When talking about lunchtimes the group of supervisors seemed to me to present a strong team identity. Within the team they recognise and respect each other's strengths and weaknesses, and support each other.

I have the impression that they feel they have to be a team because the teachers offer little guidance and do not seek their involvement.

*'So's we just get on with it and do our own things really'. Interview 1/Line 781*

The team identity is strengthened through the exclusivity of the team, in which there seems to be a divide between supervisors and teachers. This is communicated through the language that they use. The word 'we' is used throughout both interviews and often used to clarify differences between them and teachers.

*'...if you bother them'. Interview 1/Line 209*

*'...we're just a nuisance ...to them'. Interview 1/Line 494*

*'And what we expect of them...'. Interview 1/Line 1557*

Consistent with their autonomy and agency supervisors are confident that they are an effective team. The team is strengthened through joint working practices, such as routines and a rota that they have developed.

*'I think that's why we work so well. We do work as a team. I think we're quite a good team'. Interview 1/Line 626*

*'...we know what the routines are. And we work together as a team'. Interview 2/Line 929*

They endeavour to be a fair team through task allocation and adopting a rota has helped them to get involved in different areas.

*'I think this way's better because we work more together and we all know what's going on'. Interview 2/Line 276*

To further strengthen the team cohesiveness I think they make comparisons with previous supervisor teams. They feel there is now a shared responsibility for lunchtime. They feel that they are the 'new school' and that they are more forward thinking and more effective.

*'They were the old school'. Interview 1/Line 1490*

Similarly they compare themselves to the teachers, who they consider not to be working well as a team. They also think that teachers lack the confidence to admit when they find things difficult.

*'It would be like saying they couldn't do their job'. Interview 1/Line 1643*

Using inclusive 'we' language and comparing themselves to other teams is unlikely to sustain a team that can operate collaboratively. Included in the supervisors' story about lunchtimes is that they need to work at being a supportive team. This takes sensitivity, confidence and trust. Supervisors dedicate time to fostering a team bond and they approach this on a personal and on a professional level.

*'We get time for a chat before lunch as well and at the end'. Interview 1/Line 1208*

*'We don't always talk about the children though. We have general chitchat. But that's important too'. Interview 1/Line 1210*

*'Cos you need that really'. Interview 2/Line 11*

The use of the word, 'need', seems significant as this suggests something about sharing, supporting and maintaining the sense of, 'team'. They have developed friendships and care for each other.

*'...we've become like friends haven't we? We kinda look out for each other'. Interview 2/Line 12*

Through talking openly and honestly as a team they learn to respect each other's particular strengths and weaknesses.

*'Not all of us are the same but that doesn't matter'. Interview 1/Line 572*

*'I know if I needed help...I'd go to S. because she knows how to handle him but I don't'. Interview 1/Line 573*

Within this trusting relationship supervisors are able to disagree and challenge each other's views.

In my view being able to challenge each other and talk about personal feelings takes real strength within the team as well as individual confidence. Earlier I had proposed that low self-esteem may be a challenge for supervisors to overcome. Now however the idea that they are a confident *team* has been raised and it is suggested this might be considered to be a strength. This apparent contradiction could be accounted for by thinking in terms of supervisors having personal inner confidence in addition to confidence in each other. This confidence may be discouraged by the school system through lack of proper acknowledgment of their skills.

In the light of their concerns about communication with other school staff it is interesting that one of the factors that they identify as a strength of the team of supervisors is communication.

*'Communicating with one another'. Interview 1/Line625*

Meeting briefly prior to their lunchtime duty fosters trusting personal and professional relationships. Within the supervisors' story it isn't clear if there are other strategies that support such relationships. Possibly it's happenstance that this particular team do get on well. If relationships were less positive it is possible that the style of supervision would be different. As a consequence the children may have different lunchtime experiences.

However, the supervisors in this study present as a supportive team. Efforts are made to sustain this because they feel they are more effective as a team. A consequence of the strong team identity appears to be creating a barrier between supervisors and teachers. I wonder if the teachers and the Head may

possibly consider them to be a formidable team of supervisors. There is the suggestion of the team being lonely. The supervisors talk of being an 'in-betweenie' such that they are neither a teacher nor a parent but a team in-between them both.

*'We need to be there for each other'. Interview 1/Line 1535*

*'It is hard, and it could be a lonely job if you felt there was nobody to turn to cos nobody understands what it's like'. Interview 2/Line 576*

Within the supervisors' story it is unclear whether supervisors developed a strong team identity because as individuals they lacked confidence, felt powerless and lonely. Alternatively it may be the exclusivity of the team that creates the barrier between supervisors and other school staff. This barrier could compound supervisors' feelings of not being a part of the school, which in turn compels them to forge a stronger team identity.

However, the supervisors present their team cohesiveness as a feature that strengthens their autonomy and agency.

### **Tertiary Theme: Shared Lunchtime Culture** (Strengthens Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

Supervisors have created a team identity. It has been suggested that there is exclusivity to this team that may preclude collaborative working practices with teachers. However, supervisors are not functioning in isolation during the lunchtime. The background literature review contained references to children's unique lunchtime culture (Davies, 1982; Ota et al., 1997). Supervisors are in an exclusive position to become a significant facet of this lunchtime culture.

Supervisors in this study recognise that children have a lunchtime culture. They also describe a supervisors' lunchtime culture. The supervisors' story suggests

children and supervisors have an awareness of the other's culture. There are times when the two cultures of children and supervisors merge to fashion a shared lunchtime culture.

In developing a lunchtime world that is shared, supervisors acquire unique knowledge about lunchtimes that promotes their self-esteem, status and power. The shared understanding about lunchtime also facilitates their autonomy and agency.

The different lunchtime cultures will now be explored.

### Children's lunchtime culture

In analysing the supervisors' story I came to understand how supervisors appreciate that children have their own lunchtime culture. They understand that through their culture children make choices about their play and form their identities. Children's lunchtime culture serves to moderate each other's behaviour and choices. Unspoken rules are donated through the culture (about football and the use of space for instance). Supervisors also understand that the lunchtime culture is different and more challenging for children than the classroom culture. For instance there is uncertainty about rules.

*'I think as well the kids know what to do in the class. They sort of know what is acceptable and what isn't'. Interview 1/Line 545*

I think that supervisors may believe that despite this uncertainty about the rules of the playground children are free to play in a way that can avoid the influence of adult suggestion. Children are able to devise games that adults do not understand.

*'But it's like with the made up games, it's not as though we tell them what to do. Nor the teachers or the mams. I mean you wouldn't say would you, "Go and have a bit roll on the dirty ground with your friend today son". It's funny that when you think'. Interview 1/Line 172*

*'...and yet I know if I said, "Play with that pile of leaves", they'd look at me like I was a spaceman or something'. Interview 1/Line 107*

Within the children's lunchtime culture a social hierarchy is formed. Supervisors suggest it is shaped without obvious decision making. This is about children's culture and supervisors do not understand how it occurs or believe they have influence over it. Their lack of influence appears not to cause supervisors' concern. This may be because there are times when they are 'invited' to join the children.

*'And they look to us to play with them sometimes'. Interview 1/Line 389*

Furthermore, supervisors are keen for children to be independent and think that children benefit from the opportunity to negotiate and clarify individual identities amongst themselves and away from adult interference.

*'Odd though isn't it, how some are top yet you can't explain why. It's not like they have a vote or anything but they all seem to know who's who. No matter what we say or do they sort out the pecking order'. Interview 1/Line 141*

### Supervisors' lunchtime culture

Operating alongside the children's lunchtime culture is the supervisors' lunchtime culture. The supervisors' story is suggesting that part of their culture is about facilitating their own autonomy and agency. In trying to bring meaning to the supervisors' lunchtime experiences I have already proposed that there are

certain features to their story that challenge their autonomy and agency. Such features include their self-esteem, status and power, communication, relationships and conflict with teachers, parents and children, concerns about blame and time demands. Supervisors' joy and motivation, their satisfaction gained from the demanding role, the wealth of skills that they utilise and the strength of the team are also a part of supervisors' lunchtime culture. These latter features reinforce supervisors' autonomy and agency.

So far not all aspects of the supervisors' story have been explored and some of these relate to supervisors' lunchtime culture. Supervisors' lunchtime culture for instance also includes getting to know children and develop relationships with them. Having a sense of ownership of the lunchtime is another aspect to the supervisors' lunchtime culture. A further element to the supervisors' culture is a belief that children's independence at lunchtimes should be encouraged. These will be discussed more fully in later sections.

### Shared lunchtime culture

The review of the background literature asserted that children would discover adult agendas and this would influence their behaviours (Davies, 1982).

Supervisors in this study believe that children have developed an understanding of adult agendas. They hold the view that children use this to their advantage when wanting to pursue their own agendas.

*'The children can tell you which teacher will let them get away with something so they go and ask them. They're not daft'. Interview 1/Line 1197*

Supervisors believe that children are able to moderate their own behaviours to present some conformity to the supervisors' agenda. The supervisors' story



alludes to children getting to know and being able to read supervisors and the situation.

*'Sometimes y'know they're so clever at knowing just how far to go, and then they pull back'. Interview 1/Line 368*

*'They know what we want'. Interview 2/Line 934*

When asked how children know what is expected of them supervisors were confident that:

*'I don't know really. They just do'. Interview 2/Line 949*

They also think that children read the situation.

*'That's part of the learning though isn't? Pushing boundaries, seeing how far they can push things, and us'. Interview 1/Line 365*

*'I suppose if they want a play fight like they laugh and make it look like a great game so's we won't say anything'. Interview 1/Line 373*

*'They can maybes tell from your face'. Interview 2/Line 976*

Supervisors realise that children have an understanding about adults which they will exploit to their advantage. Nevertheless, supervisors express a need to have a sense of control which they try to communicate to the children.

*'I'm more confident with the children now and they can sense that so I don't get any nonsense'. Interview 1/Line 1523*

Whilst being familiar with children's ability to 'read' supervisors they in turn are confident that they can 'read' children. It is this mutual reading that creates a shared understanding of the lunchtime culture. Presumably the different adult

and child cultures have the potential to combine with some coherency and compromise. The problem lunchtimes that are discussed in some of the literature might occur because of conflict between the two different agendas.

*'They read us like books'. Interview 2/Line 987*

*'They think they know us but we can read them like books'. Interview 2/Line 620*

A further anecdote that exemplifies the shared understanding between children and supervisors involves supervisors taking a piece of paper and pen out of a pocket as though to write down a child's name. This is signal enough for the child to stop whatever it was they were doing.

*'...and I don't even have to write anything down and they're away. The paper goes back. It's going back to kidology'. Interview 1/Line 1168*

They talked of another supervisor who:

*'...couldn't make anything of them...there'd be chaos...'. Interview 2/Line 981*

This implies that supervisors need to somehow 'shape' children so that they understand how a supervisor expects them to behave to ensure there isn't chaos.

Supervising the junior toilet door takes time and supervisors have identified that the children make a game of challenging this by trying to get in.

*'Well it's like a game isn't it? For them to see if they can get in before we notice them...I think we set ourselves up sometimes'. Interview 2/Line 1176*

It is possible that the children and supervisors share an understanding that within the school system it is usual for children to try to challenge. Hence,

unintentionally perhaps, setting up minor situations for children to challenge permits them to devote energy to this, as opposed to something that has the potential to be more serious.

Supervisors have developed certain routines and a rota which the children understand and follow. This further promotes the shared nature of the lunchtime culture. It also enables the supervisors to feel responsible for having established working practices that suit them.

*'I know but we've got that sussed really haven't we?'. Interview 1/Line 563*

*'And the children know what to do'. Interview 1/Line 564*

Although supervisors wish to retain a sense of confident control part of the shared experience is a joy in children.

*'We have a bit of a laugh don't we? Things that kids have done or said'.*

*Interview 1/Line 798*

The shared lunchtime culture promotes the supervisors' autonomy and agency through knowledge.

### Shared lunchtime culture challenges

The shared world is advantageous for effective lunchtime management. It affirms supervisors' autonomy and agency. However, the shared world also brings with it some potential challenges. I am presenting this here as opposed to in the section which gives an account of the secondary theme of challenges to supervisors' autonomy and agency. The reason for this is simply because I think it makes more sense having first explored my interpretation of the supervisors' experiences of lunchtime cultures. Also the supervisors' story implies some

awareness of how the shared nature of the lunchtime culture can present certain challenges. This awareness is, I think, a strength.

In their story supervisors give the impression it is essential that supervisors respect barriers between them and the children. Retaining a barrier confirms the supervisory status but also allows children space to enjoy their own lunchtime agenda. They were, for instance, critical of one supervisor who was,

*'...like one of the children...'. Interview 1/Line 584*

They also talk of the need to be role models for the children.

*'Well you know you don't run down the corridor, cos you're trying to set an example...'. Interview 1/Line 587*

Supervisors further illustrate potential pitfalls for adults being drawn into the child's world by getting too involved in disputes.

*'It comes down to they are children. The adults fall out and the children are friends in five minutes'. Interview 1/Line 1452*

Collusion with children is another challenge. In the interpretation of the supervisors' story I was concerned that in wanting to enhance the idea of a shared lunchtime world with children supervisors might unwittingly collude with children. This potentially may compromise the role of the supervising adult and undermine other adults. Extracts of the interviews are indicative of some collusion.

*'...something they've told you about their dad like and y'know they'd go mad'. Interview 1/Line 91*

*'If only they could see what some of their treasures get up to sometimes, it'd turn their hair blue'. Interview 1/Line 325*

This creates a confusing picture in which the boundaries between children and supervisors are blurred. One moment the supervisor is the adult who directs and reprimands, then acts like mother, then a teacher and then they are party to unsuitable things that children say or do but supervisors do not appear to challenge.

Despite these challenges supervisors appreciate the unique opportunity to share the children's lunchtime culture. They are also aware of the supervisory aspect to their agenda which drives them to direct children or intervene. Supervisors express a desire to moderate this to give children space to play in an unpredictable, innovative and creative way. The supervisors' story suggests they are keen to offer children opportunities to pursue their own lunchtime agenda.

### **Tertiary Theme: Knowing Children and Developing Relationships with**

#### **Children** (Strengthens Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

Based on the supervisors' account of their lunchtime experiences I have inferred that lunchtimes are about the different child and supervisor agendas. I suggest that each has an understanding of the other's agenda. Children and supervisors work both alongside and within the agenda of the other such that a shared lunchtime culture is created. My understanding of the supervisors' story is that this shared lunchtime culture embraces knowing children. It also incorporates the development of a relationship with children that is unique. Supervisors consider that a positive relationship with children facilitates children's overall development. They also appear to believe that relationships are the foundation to the effective management of lunchtime.

For instance when asked about the necessary conditions to be an effective supervisor the responses signify a requirement to know children and to be sensitive to their individual needs.

*'I think the biggest thing is probably knowing the children'. Interview 1/Line 615*

*'...watching the children, getting to know them, being available if need be. I think that's what our job is about...'. Interview 2/Line 842*

I sense that supervisors have some confidence in their own abilities to develop this knowledge and form positive relationships with children. This is exemplified by their views on training.

*'Yes, it's got to be a hands on job. It's all right reading about it. It's about personal relationships. And children. They're all different, very individual'. Interview 1/Line 1527*

In taking this 'hands on' approach supervisors employ different strategies to get to know children as individuals to develop relationships with them. Getting to know children is done through observation of them at lunchtimes. It also comes with experience.

*'...you get to know the kids and you know which ones you can be silly with. And which ones you have to be firm with and which ones you can be daft with'. Interview 1/Line 1505*

I inferred that supervisors value opportunities to develop their relationships with children that are more than observation and informal ad hoc interactions. For instance the supervisors had a discussion about the relative merits of being

assigned to a class. They were positive about how this helped to boost relationships.

*'...it was possible to bring out good points as well as bad points'. Interview 1/Line 1093*

*'I think it made it a lot easier to manage the class having a relationship with them'. Interview 1/Line 1121*

Similarly when they talked about the lunchtime pupil buddies an earlier system had not worked well due to lack of consultation with children. They reviewed the system and focussed more on building a relationship with the children and, importantly, seeking their views.

*'Yeah we got the kids together and listened to their opinion and went with them'. Interview 1/Line 1347*

Not only does this convey the value that supervisors place on relationships but it also demonstrates supervisors' willingness to be reflective to improve situations. They also recognise that as children are the lunchtime experts their views should be sought. This issue was raised in the background literature review, with some reservation over whether adults might worry about the redistribution of power in involving children in decision making (Sheat and Beer, 1994). Supervisors in this study however value contributions from children.

To help foster relationships with children supervisors' comments convey how they value the nature of the rota.

*'You get to know more of the kids that way...'. Interview 2/Line 281*

The relationship between supervisors and children is further enhanced through the nurturing role that they undertake, which they describe as:

*'....talk to them...listen...comfort...reassure...settle'. Interview 1/Lines 199-203*

*'It's not about checking behaviour and telling kids off. Well some of it is. But you need to do that nurturing'. Interview 1/Line 842*

In building relationships with children I sense how supervisors are aware of the need to be positive with children.

*'It's good when we've got time to talk and praise the children'. Interview 1/Line 755*

Supervisors introduce an interesting concept of 'codology' or 'kidology' which they use in conjunction with humour within their nurturing role to enhance their relationships with children.

*'We have what you might call, 'codology'. Yeah. Cold water on a bump. Hurt you leg? Oh you've got one that still works'. Interview 1/Line 642*

*'It's going back to the kidology'. Interview 1/Line 1167*

Physical proximity enhances relationships too because it helps to create the impression of a shared and private moment between the child and the adult.

*'You need to get near to the children'. Interview 2/Line 93*

The supervisors convey a belief that they are able to develop a balanced view of children. They believe they have an understanding of 'normality' which permits them to accept children as they are, even when they present with challenges.

When asked about a miracle event for instance supervisors claim:



*'...the children would just be what you would expect and want children to be'.*

*Interview 1/Line 1698*

My understanding of the supervisors' story is that they appreciate and respect individual children's backgrounds and differences. In the supervisors' story there are many references to children as individuals.

*'Yeah but what about those ones that don't join in, or don't have friends'.*

*Interview 1/Line 55*

*'Then you might know that that little'un is always telling tales, so you maybes deal with her different like to somebody else who has come with a genuine tale'. Interview 1/Line 460*

Supervisors claim that within this shared world the relationship is such that there is trust between them and the children. They also present themselves as role models.

*'They relate to you. They know you're not a teacher as such and they can talk to you. And you'll listen to them'. Interview 1/Line 650*

*'...they look up to you... Interview 1/Line 848*

Being a role model is a novel idea not previously raised in my story of lunchtime or in the background literature.

Forging relationships with children that are based on an understanding of children is further facilitated through being a parent.

*'...it's mother to all, mother to none'. Interview 2/Line 144*

But they seem aware that their relationship with children is different to that of the parent.

*'...listen a bit more. You're not as loving. You're not as closely connected.*

*You know they're not the little angel all of the time. You know that little so and so'. Interview 1/Line 931*

They also believe that their relationship with the children is different to the relationship that teachers have with children.

*'I don't think we need to be quite as distant...They have to be more authoritarian whereas...we can be more nurturing'. Interview 1/Line 955*

I think that supervisors were telling me that in knowing children as individuals and being with them during the lunchtime supervisors believe that they are able to develop a relationship with children. The supervisors believe that their relationship with children is unique and unlike the relationship between children and teachers and children and parents.

In trying to make sense of the supervisors' story I have inferred that relationship building is associated with being better able to respond to children's needs. Equally I recognise that it is possible that there may be another layer to this. In enhancing their knowledge about children and developing this unique relationship supervisors find themselves in a powerful position. Teachers and parents are excluded from this rather privileged arrangement. Some of the supervisors' comments suggest a purposeful attempt to convey and retain exclusivity.

*'You know background, sometimes, but you wouldn't talk to others about it'. Interview 1/Line 1456*

Supervisors clearly value their relationship with children and recognise this to be different to the relationships children have with parents and teachers. They refer

to themselves as, 'in-betweenies' (Interview 2/Line 155). They are neither a parent nor a teacher. They are possibly floundering to establish a firm identity. This forms an impression of the supervisors' role as being indistinct.

I think there is an interesting connection here too with the challenge to supervisors' status and power through the age of the child. Supervisors may also arguably hold a position that is 'in-between' the older children (particularly Year 6) and the teachers in terms of the perceived hierarchy. Older children and supervisors may therefore be jostling for position.

Alternatively it might be because they are 'in-betweenies' they are able to gain access to the lunchtime world of the children. More closely defining their role could restrict their opportunities to be 'in-betweenies' with unique access to the children's lunchtime world. The concepts of the shared world and relationships with children are considered to be features that strengthen supervisors' autonomy and agency, but some aspects, such as the 'in-betweenie' role, challenge it too.

### **Tertiary Theme: Management of Behaviour** (Strengthens Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

The issue of children's behaviour is a complex one. On the one hand aspects of children's behaviour and the need to manage this challenge supervisors' status and power. On the other hand supervisors expressed a confidence in a range of behaviour management strategies. On balance, in this story of lunchtimes, I have drawn the conclusion that behaviour management is a factor that strengthens supervisors' autonomy and agency.

Contrary to some of the literature that was reviewed (for instance the Elton report, 1989; Ross and Ryan, 1994) supervisors in this study experience

children's lunchtime behaviour as being of some concern, but not significantly so. They say that they experience children getting on with each other and playing cooperatively.

*'Most of them do really most of the time'. Interview 2/Line 939*

Behaviour doesn't seem to be a generic issue but the ramifications of it can be. A child can become a poor role model and others may imitate to see how far they can go.

*'Sometimes if they see this child getting away with something they have a little go at it to see how far they can push the boundaries. So they do a little test'. Interview 1/Line 1041*

However supervisors suggest they are aware of behavioural challenges and are prepared to respond if the need arises. In managing children's behaviour part of the difficulty for supervisors is about the lack of communication and limited collaborative practices with other school staff. A further challenge is a perceived lack of respect from children, which has been discussed earlier. Nonetheless supervisors feel they have a range of strategies at their disposal. They think that behaviour management is enhanced through their understanding of children's culture and knowing and respecting individuals.

*'That's where being approachable helps...'. Interview 2/Line 226*

*'...not kinda chasing after them. You're the one that's in control like'. Interview 2/Line 390*

*'...make sure there's none of their mates about and have a quiet word like'. Interview 2/Line 391*

*'...you have to respect them really. That way they don't have it in for you either. You always keep your relationship on a positive footing'. Interview 2/Line 401*

Supervisors appreciate there are specific occasions when their confidence is vulnerable. They raise this in a reflective and enquiring way.

*'I'd like to know how to avoid problems...'. Interview 2/Line 443*

Supervisors' behaviour management skills and their willingness to be reflective strengthen their autonomy and agency.

**Tertiary Theme: Ownership of Lunchtime** (Strengthens Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency)

The background literature suggested teachers have a limited awareness of what is happening at lunchtimes and only really become involved when problems are brought to their attention (Sluckin, 1981; Davies, 1982). Supervisors in this study confirm this view. They believe that the Head and teachers have limited interest in the purpose of lunchtimes or what is happening during the lunchtime.

Supervisors in this study do more than confirm views espoused in the existing literature however. They express a keen sense of responsibility for children at lunchtime. They would like to acquire and maintain ownership of the lunchtime. My understanding of their story is that supervisors want to develop their own lunchtime autonomy and agency. They wish to use their skills and power to control events at lunchtimes for the benefit of children's autonomy and agency. Earlier the shared lunchtime culture was discussed and it was suggested that other adults are excluded from aspects of the lunchtime culture. This arises naturally because other adults aren't present but also through collusion between supervisors and the children. This exclusion of other adults consolidates

supervisors' ownership of lunchtimes. The desire to take ownership of lunchtime is expressed through supervisors' frustrations over who is considered to be 'in charge'.

*'...I get frustrated that the teachers say we're in charge at lunchtimes but then they make up the rules as they go along'. Interview 1/Line 986*

*'I find it hard knowing who is in charge when the teacher is there'. Interview 2/Line 1042*

I think they may be worried about being judged by teachers as this would undermine their self-esteem and status.

*'...when teachers come out and I do sometimes cringe when things happen...'. Interview 2/Line 1190*

Ownership of lunchtimes is conveyed through supervisors' smooth organisation which relies on their routines and the rota. Possibly this also gives supervisors a feeling of security. Sharing an understanding with children on organisational matters affirms their ownership.

*'...but we've got it sussed really haven't we? And the children know what to do'. Interview 1/Line 563*

*'We've got a routine. That rota's good...We could look at the clock and we know what we should be doing and where we should be'. Interview 1/Line 1493*

The counter argument to this is that when problems occur at lunchtime it reflects poorly on supervisors. They might be perceived, or perceive themselves to be, as incapable of controlling matters at lunchtime.

The claim for ownership is not restricted to smooth organisation. The discussion about the shared world conveyed supervisors' understanding that children are able to 'read' supervisors and their agenda. For that reason I think supervisors are keen to present a particular 'persona' to the children which gives the impression of being confident and in control. This is rather like the 'kidology' and 'codology' that they referred to in sustaining relationships with children.

*'Be confident. Know that you're in charge and that you know what you're doing. It'd be no good if the kids thought you didn't know what you were doing, even if you don't really'. Interview 1/Line 600*

The idea that children should accept that supervisors are confidently in control is particularly important to supervisors. This is perhaps connected to their vulnerable self-esteem and sense of status and power.

In conjunction with presenting a persona to the children supervisors use words and phrases that suggest their experiences of supervising are about having power to give or withhold permission in a way that assumes ownership. The supervisors' story contains numerous references to this, for instance:

*'To let them...'. Interview 1/Line 3*

*'...allow this'. Interview 1/Line 1609*

I deem this to imply that supervisors therefore try to create an impression of being in control through persona and language. They also feel it is important to be aware of everything that is happening at lunchtimes to give a strong indication of 'ownership'.

The pursuit of ownership is particularly sought through being able to see what is going on. There are numerous visual references made during the interviews

*'...watching the children. Keeping an eye on them...Just being watchful'.*

*Interview 1/Line 820*

*'We can keep an eye on things'. Interview 1/Line 701*

*'It's a good lunchtime when you can see them all and you know what they are doing'. Interview 1/Line 732*

*'You've got to be constantly watching'. Interview 2/Line 801*

*'...they need to know, the kids, that we're looking at everything...'. Interview 2/Line 818*

*'...if I stand back and just watch I learn all sorts of things...'. Interview 2/Line 825*

In trying to make sense of their story I came to appreciate that the visual language conveys something about the very core of how supervisors view their role. It is about *seeing* everything that goes on. But I think supervisors also want to give children the space to play independently, within the parameter of being able to be seen.

*'You've got to give them space. You can't like be over them all the time. It's not like we're patrolling around looking for trouble to sort out'. Interview 1/Line 823*

Being aware of what is happening bestows power to the supervisors. This seems to give them the ability to control which generates a sense of ownership of lunchtime. Other adults are not in a position to see what occurs at lunchtimes and perhaps cannot therefore make a strong claim for ownership.



## **Summary of Features that Strengthen Supervisors' Autonomy and Agency**

The supervisors' story of lunchtime conveys their feelings about the various challenges which interfere with their lunchtime autonomy and agency.

Nonetheless supervisors have a joy of children which compensates for the challenges. They consider their role to be a demanding one but feel confident that they have a range of valuable skills. They endeavour to be reflective in their practice. They also present as a strong and supportive team.

Supervisors have developed an understanding of lunchtime cultures, aspects of which they share with children to enhance autonomy and agency. This is further consolidated through supervisors' unique knowledge of children and their relationships with them. Although potentially challenging some of the children's behaviour presents supervisors with opportunities to employ their understanding of the shared culture and their relationships with children. Challenging behaviour also provides supervisors with opportunities to demonstrate their skills and to be reflective. This understanding of the lunchtime culture and the supervisors' skills promotes the pursuit of ownership of lunchtimes. It is through ownership that supervisors feel they would be able to demonstrate their autonomy and agency.

#### **5.4.2 Primary Story Theme: Children's Autonomy and Agency**

Children are able to take a break from class work to have lunch and see to personal needs. However I have understood that in the supervisors' story one of the main purposes of lunchtime is about children achieving autonomy and agency. As defined earlier, autonomy is about personal independence and self-sufficiency. Agency is independent ability to control events.

Features of the supervisors' story of lunchtime suggest that the underlying theme is about their own autonomy and agency so that they can be effective supervisors. Supervisors believe that play at lunchtime provides unique opportunities for children to develop emotionally and socially and that as such this strengthens children's present and future autonomy and agency.

I detect that supervisors believe they have a role in facilitating children's realization of autonomy and agency. The background literature suggests that lunchtime play is about enjoying and coping with the present and preparing for the future (Sluckin, 1981). However the existing literature did not single out the extent that supervisors are involved in this or how they are concerned with getting it right.

*'Well that's right, you need to think about what you're doing don't you?*

*Especially as it's children we're dealing with and if we get it wrong with them when they're so young it could have some impact on what they turn out like'.*

*Interview 2/Line 646*

The supervisors' story about lunchtime reflected various challenges to children's autonomy and agency. It also reflected features that strengthen their autonomy and agency.

#### **5.4.2a Secondary Theme: Challenges to Children's Autonomy and Agency**

The challenges that supervisors believe children face in enhancing their autonomy and agency will now be presented as tertiary themes.

#### **Tertiary Theme: Assumptions** (Challenges to Children's Autonomy and Agency)

##### **Age**

Earlier it was suggested that supervisors experience the age of the children to be a challenge to supervisor's autonomy and agency. Supervisors' attitude towards age and older children is such that I think this in turn presents as a challenge to the children's autonomy and agency. For instance supervisors spoke of using a 'cuddle' to curb the behaviour of older children (Interview 2/Line 136). This could result in children feeling uncomfortable about seeking physical comfort.

There is a lack of trust of some older children.

*'...the juniors really...getting up to goodness knows what'. Interview 2/Line 670*

Thus older children in the school may feel that adults do not trust them or nurture them in the same way they do for younger children. This lack of trust may shape the choices they make at lunchtime and their identity.

##### **Gender**

To a lesser extent gender is raised. Supervisors make comments that reflect the different expectations they have of boys and girls. This will possibly shape the choices children make which in turn may challenge their autonomy and agency.

*'I think it's just boys are sorta expected to run around more, or play fight. The girls don't do they?'. Interview 1/Line 166*

*'The girls...make up more games'. Interview 1/Line 125*

*'Or perhaps they lack the imagination of the girls'. Interview 1/Line 164*

They suggest that it is expectations about the way that boys *should* play that inhibits their imaginative game playing. The supervisors' story is not explicit about how such expectations are communicated to boys.

### Family

Supervisors refer to their personal knowledge of children's families. I understand this to be them using such information to formulate assumptions about the messages that parents give to children.

*'Well sometime you only have to look at their families. It's a shame really; some of them don't stand a chance'. Interview 1/Line 155*

The concern for children's autonomy and agency here is that such assumptions could be communicated to the children and the comments could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The assumptions may also make a difference to the relationships that supervisors have with those children.

### Past experiences

Further assumptions are made about children's likely behaviour based on supervisors' past experiences with them.

*'... you get to know the children, which ones are likely to create so they're the ones you know to keep an eye on'. Interview 1/Line 1366*

Supervisors claim to be able to 'read' children. They claim to be able to do this partly through their knowledge of individuals and their understanding of children's lunchtime culture. Supervisors also rely a little on their intuition. Again these

assumptions may impact on the choices that children make and their sense of autonomy.

**Tertiary Theme: Dominance of Football** (Challenges to Children's Autonomy and Agency)

Consistent with other research the issue of football comes up in relation to its dominance for older boys.

*'But the boys, its football, football, football'. Interview 1/Line 1822*

*'...the football was a bit of a problem, as usual. The bigger ones were hogging it'. Interview 2/Line 1000*

Other research reviewed in the background literature suggested that games are an arena where opposition is expected to test and realign social identities (Goodwin et al., 2002). Football provides a means for boys to socialise, solve problems and sort their social hierarchy. In this study it's not necessarily the game of football itself that supervisors consider to be a problem. It is the way that the children play it and the expectations they have about being allowed to play in a domineering way.

*'...you only have about 20 or so lads and they have most of the playground so it's not fair. The girls can't get a ball and throw that...'. Interview 2/Line 326*

*'...they all need a fair crack at the whip at lunchtimes. Be able to have a go at whatever they want'. Interview 2/Line 1024*

There is also concern expressed amongst the supervisors that the boys are limiting their own experiences at lunchtime. They imply that they think playing football is of limited benefit to children's development.

*'It would make a nice change if they played something else'. Interview 2/Line*

333

*'Use their brains a bit more. Mix more with the girls and the younger ones.*

*Have a bit of a chat'. Interview 2/Line 339*

Supervisors expressed the view that the dominance of football is a potential challenge to children's autonomy and agency through restricted choice and ownership of space. Social identities are ascribed through either inclusion or exclusion from the main football game.

### **Tertiary Theme: Restrictions to Play** (Challenges to Children's Autonomy and Agency)

In a later section comments about the quality of children's play are discussed as a factor that strengthens children's autonomy and agency. However, supervisors also feel that aspects of children's play present a challenge. Their lunchtime story includes concerns about influences on children's play, the lack of variety and the lack of play skills.

*'...they seem to want to sit back and be entertained don't they? It's with the electronic games and the television, they don't have to think now, just press a button'. Interview 1/Line 111*

*'It'd be better if they knew how to play and how to share things'. Interview 1/Line 752*

Supervisors would appear to prefer it if children had a willingness to engage in a wider range of play opportunities to boost their autonomy and agency. If a miracle happened supervisors would like the children to:

*'...try different things, not just stick to the same things every day'. Interview*

*1/Line 1880*

They want variety and choice for the children but I wonder if the children do have some choice and still, 'stick to the same things', would this be acceptable, provided it really is a choice that they were free to make?

It may be conjecture that children do not play as they used to and now rely on electronic games. It is possible that children play more than they are given credit for. Indeed, later in their story, the supervisors share observations about the variety they observe within children's play.

Ultimately the supervisors seem concerned that restrictions to choices in play will impact on children's autonomy and agency.

### **Tertiary Theme: Facilities** (Challenges to Children's Autonomy and Agency)

The background research that was reviewed suggested that children wanted space and equipment (Evans, 1996). Similarly in this study, children are said to be enjoying the lunchtime play opportunities but supervisors are apparently concerned about the lack of facilities for children to develop their play.

*'...and they come out, to what, I mean really what is there?'. Interview 1/Line 747*

*'They do need a net to throw a ball at. They've got a choice then, whether to play or not'. Interview 1/Line 1846*

Supervisors also think there should be clear expectations of children using the play areas and resources.

*'...we need to set things up with teachers'. Interview 2/Line 241*

Supervisors seem to be suggesting that the implication of poor play facilities is that this reduces children's choices. This in turn restricts children's autonomy and agency.

**Tertiary Theme: Safety and Risk** (Challenges to Children's Autonomy and Agency)

During the interviews supervisors talked about how they feel there is an expectation from parents and teachers that ensuring children's safety is the responsibility of supervisors. Supervisors seem not to welcome such a responsibility for fear of being blamed should safety be compromised.

However, supervisors are particularly challenging about what they see as the over-protection of children. They claim that it is the adult attitude towards risk that compromises children's autonomy and agency. They argue that children can learn through taking risks. They talk of trusting children to use their common sense to guide their choices. Supervisors express a measure of confidence in children's decision making that stems from their unique knowledge.

*'They know, well most of them do, they know how far to go. I mean you wouldn't find them trying to scale up the side of the school wall or do something really dangerous. Kids aren't daft and I think we should give them more credit than we do. They usually have common sense'. Interview 1/Line 341*

They rightly point out that they (or other adults) won't always be there to protect and guide children. Their argument is consistent with the notion that learning through play is preparation for the future. They are also keen to avoid 'paranoid parenting' (Furedi, 2002).



*'They need to sort it out their selves cos we won't be there all the time to do it for them'. Interview 1/Line 350*

### **Summary of Challenges to Children's Autonomy and Agency**

In exploring the supervisors' story of lunchtime I have made some relatively tentative inferences about challenges to children's autonomy and agency. Some of these challenges arise from assumptions that supervisors make about children and what they perceive to be limiting factors in play choices.

#### **5.4.2b Secondary Theme: Strengthens Children's Autonomy and Agency**

The interpretation of the supervisors' lunchtime story has led to speculation over lunchtime factors that strengthen children's efforts to attain autonomy and agency. These factors will be detailed as tertiary themes.

#### **Tertiary Theme: Happiness** (Strengthens Children's Autonomy and Agency)

Research into children's feelings about lunchtimes had been reviewed as a part of the background to this study (for example, Titman, 1994; Blatchford et al., 2003). In this present study supervisors have clear views about children's happiness. They consider that children should be happy at lunchtimes. They feel that they have some responsibility to ensure that children enjoy their lunchtime experiences. Aside from the intrinsic pleasure that being happy brings at that moment supervisors seem to believe that a state of happiness facilitates children's future autonomy and agency.

Supervisors state:

*'As long as they're happy. That's what we're here for'. Interview 2/Line 139*

Through their belief that they know children supervisors are confident that children generally enjoy lunchtimes and feel good about supervisors.

*'They associate us with that nice time of being fed and playing'. Interview 1/Line 969*

The supervisors claim to be very busy at lunchtime though. Thus the challenge to balance the practical demands of the role with wanting to ensure children are happy may be a frustrating conflict for supervisors. Nonetheless I think that the supervisors consider happy children to be capable of developing autonomy and agency.

**Tertiary Theme: Self-esteem** (Strengthens Children's Autonomy and Agency)

Supervisors' comments suggest they regard lunchtimes as an opportunity for children to achieve success through play. They are implying that for some children success may not be experienced in the classroom context. Achievement at lunchtime boosts children's self-esteem. Ultimately self-esteem enhances children's autonomy and agency. The assumption is that there isn't an acute sense of the right or wrong way to play.

*'...that's one of the things about being on the playground, even the ones who find class work hard can play and get some success'. Interview 1/Line 52*

**Tertiary Theme: Voice of the Child** (Strengthens Children's Autonomy and Agency)

Closely linked to children's autonomy and agency is the voice of the child. In the existing research a study was reviewed in which it was reported that children wanted to be involved in decisions about lunchtime initiatives (Blatchford, et al., 1990).

Supervisors say that, as with the buddy system, issues need to be properly discussed and negotiated with children. Involvement encourages a sense of ownership.

*'It is important to kids to have their say, to say what they want to say'.*

*Interview 1/Line 1389*

*'...what you have to do is give ones that's mostly involved the chance to say their bit...'. Interview 2/Line 733*

The sense that I made of this aspect of the supervisors' story is that they endeavour to listen to the voice of the child. In doing this the supervisors are able to strengthen the children's autonomy and agency.

### **Tertiary Theme: Social Development** (Strengthens Children's Autonomy and Agency)

The background literature suggests that at lunchtime children learn social skills to enable enjoyment of the present but also to prepare for the future (Sluckin, 1981; Ross and Ryan, 1994). Supervisors in this study believe that for children to develop their autonomy and agency they need to practice essential social skills at lunchtime.

*'Social skills'. Interview 1/Line 33*

*'I think they need to have their little arguments though don't they? They need to learn how to sort things out amongst their selves'. Interview 1/Line 1883*

*'Well it's what they need when they're up, adults like'. Interview 2/Line 49*

The supervisors' role in children's social development was not particularly highlighted in either the job descriptions that were considered or in the background research that was reviewed. In sharing their story about lunchtime

supervisors in this study talked of a sense of responsibility for promoting children's social skills.

*'...try to get them to sort out their own little problems'. Interview 1/Line 879*

*'We have to kinda, listen and advise them, sort of guide them'. Interview 1/Line 924*

*'We set things up...we try to make sure that the children are playing and getting on with each other'. Interview 2/Line 46*

Arguments between children are considered to be, 'minor', (Interview 1/Line 1395). I am surmising that supervisors expect children to quarrel at lunchtime. They appear to value these as opportunities for children to practice resolving disputes.

Of more concern to the supervisors is play fighting.

*'The play fighting's the worst though. They don't know when to stop and some of them don't know their own strength'. Interview 1/Line 1399*

Supervisors say they need to moderate play fighting because children lack self-control. This contradicts another part of their story that suggested adults should trust children to make good decisions about risk.

In some of the literature reviewed as part of this study it is argued that rough and tumble play is an important means by which boys develop and maintain friendships (Reed and Roth, 2001). The research suggested that boys use physical activity to express emotions. The supervisors in this study are struggling to see these benefits.

Despite their concerns about play fighting the supervisors' story contains significant references to the value of practising social skills during lunchtime.

**Tertiary Theme: Play** (Strengthens Children's Autonomy and Agency)

The literature review outlined the value of play (Roderick, et al., 1997; Broadhead, 2008). The unique significance of play at lunchtimes was espoused (Hillman, 1993; Thompson et al., 1997). Contrary to this view various studies were presented that explored problems encountered at lunchtime (for instance Titman, 1994; Blatchford, 1998). The concerns about lunchtime behaviour cast doubt on the realisation of the likely benefits of lunchtime. Moreover the scarcity of research into the views of lunchtime supervisors meant that it was unclear whether supervisors understood the value of play and their role in promoting positive lunchtime experiences.

However, in this study the supervisors' story about lunchtime revealed strong views about the relationship between children's social skills and their play. Consistent with the background literature supervisors acknowledged that children's play opportunities are limited by changes in society and protective parenting.

*'It's good for them to play though isn't it? Some of them don't get much chance to do that nowadays'. Interview 1/Line 62*

Earlier it was observed that supervisors perceived play to present a challenge to children's autonomy and agency. They discussed the routine nature of children's play today. They also said that children now needed to be entertained. Conversely the supervisors' story also reflects variety and imagination in children's play.

At lunchtime supervisors experience children playing in a special way that is distinctive to children. Their observations of children's play expound the explorative nature of play, the wonder of play and children's imaginations. Supervisors appear to appreciate that the value of play lies in the child's control of how they play.

*'Playing is like experimenting isn't it. Mums and dads, Doctors and nurses.*

*"Oh I wonder if I can catch the ball 10 times". Interview 1/Line68*

*'...have a go and see what happens, where it takes them'. Interview 1/Line 71*

*'A leaf turns into a special thing that gives them power or a sound that makes them travel through time'. Interview 1/Line 104*

Supervisors talked of their responsibility for supporting the development of children's social skills. They express a similar sense of responsibility for supporting them in their play.

*'We do need to help the children to play. I think that's part of our job, about showing them things like sharing and taking turns'. Interview 1/Line 1849*

This willingness to promote children's play might have a supplementary benefit. As the adults who permit children to enjoy play the power of the supervisor may be enhanced. Equally though play opportunities promote children's autonomy and agency.

### **Tertiary Theme: Learning through Play** <sup>(Strengthens Children's Autonomy and Agency)</sup>

The background literature review presented information about school lunchtime being an opportunity for children to learn through play (Speigal, 1999). It also suggested that having a break from formal learning prepared children to focus

their attention when back in the classroom (Pellegrini and Davis, 1993; Pellegrini and Bjorklund, 1996). Supervisors in this study make an association between play and learning when they discuss the purpose of lunchtimes.

*'...counting when they walk on the number lines, learning rhymes and such like'. Interview 1/Line 278*

*'The learning just carries on, but in a different way'. Interview 1/Line 282*

In the literature review there is recognition that formal education experiences inform children's play. Supervisors include this in their story about lunchtime when they describe how a class topic on the Fire of London influenced children's play.

*'...playing a game where some of them were trapped and firemen coming to save them'. Interview 1/Line 394*

Learning through play is valued by supervisors but they also talk of children needing to be physically ready to learn. Furthermore they dwell on the potential stress placed on children when learning.

*'...well having a break helps with their learning...'. Interview 1/Line 16*

*'...lunchtimes are about having a right good play and being happy. Not having to put up with any bother or worry about schoolwork'. Interview 1/Line 310*

### **Tertiary Theme: Space** (Strengthens Children's Autonomy and Agency)

Arguably, space is a valued commodity as it provides opportunities. The supervisors' story suggests that they value children being able to use space and having ownership of space promotes their autonomy and agency.

*'It's lovely when they can get on that big field'. Interview 1/Line 710*

*'...the field is massive so there's plenty of spaces for them...'. Interview 2/Line*

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**Tertiary Theme: Safety and Risk** (Strengthens Children's Autonomy and Agency)

Concerns about children's safety have already been discussed as being a challenge to supervisors' and children's autonomy and agency. However supervisors also consider that elements of risk in children's play, within the confines of a relatively structured environment, could be beneficial.

*'I think a bit of risk is good for children'. Interview 1/Line 331*

**Tertiary Theme: Facilitated and Nurtured** (Strengthens Children's Autonomy and Agency)

Throughout the supervisors' story of lunchtime they discuss factors that challenge or strengthen their autonomy and agency and that of the children. They offer views about the role they have in both the challenging and strengthening lunchtime features. Often the supervisors used words such as 'nurture' and 'facilitate'. The essential meaning that I have extrapolated from such comments is that supervisors believe children will develop their autonomy and agency if nurtured.

The supervisors create a visual image of a motherly and nurturing figure through mention of their 'pinny' (for instance in Interview 1/Line 439). Additionally they make a number of statements that give a sense of children being nurtured at lunchtime.

*'For me it's about potential. I like to think of them as the half full glass'.*

*Interview 1/Line 891*

*'It's about being the wind beneath their wings'. Interview 2/Line 44*



*'...if we can make it better for them kids it's worth it, cos that's what we're here for isn't it?'. Interview 2/Line 1250*

Supervisors explicitly draw a distinction between the practical aspects of their role and nurturing.

*'There's two aspects really. Making sure, like you said, facilitating them getting their lunch, but then nurturing them...'. Interview 1/Line 838*

*'It's a mixture of codology and mothering'. Interview 2/Line 120*

By taking on a nurturing role this might be conceived as a means of asserting power over children. However, my perception of how they talked about nurturing was that they genuinely wanted to demonstrate care and respect.

*'...they're just individual people but they are somebody's children and that's all they are, children...'. Interview 1/Line 846*

### **Summary of Features that Strengthen Children's Autonomy and Agency**

Children's autonomy and agency is challenged through various lunchtime factors. Equally lunchtimes present children with opportunities to enhance their autonomy and agency.

The interpretation that I have made of the supervisor's story is that they consider children to be happy at lunchtime. Supervisors comment on opportunities for children to promote their self-esteem. Social skills can be practiced and reinforced. Moreover children can enjoy the opportunity for independent, creative and enjoyable play. It is through play that children's learning is consolidated. Supervisors value the voice of the child and seek to encourage them to share their views. There are issues around space and risk that perhaps challenge

supervisors and children. However, supervisors are sensitive to the potential benefits of these in the promotion of children's autonomy and agency.

Of particular significance is the role that supervisors believe they have in facilitating and nurturing children's present and future autonomy and agency.

## **5.5 Overall Summary of Results and Conclusions**

### **5.5.1 Overview of Results**

As suggested in the presentation of results my interpretation of the supervisors' 'lived in' experience and story of lunchtime is understandably associated with children's experiences. Supervisors' experiences are underpinned by their feelings about their personal autonomy and agency. They want to be confident to use their personal and professional qualities and skills to control events at lunchtime. This is principally because they consider themselves to be the adults responsible for supervision at lunchtime. It is this position which they feel bestows them the capacity to strengthen children's present and future autonomy and agency. They believe this is the primary objective of lunchtime at school. They consider themselves to be the children's supportive partners in this process.

When sharing their story supervisors identify various factors that compromise their own autonomy and agency. Their self-esteem is challenged and they are aware of their lack of qualifications. Their vulnerable self-esteem is demonstrated through their desire to be needed. It is further confirmed through their wish to be appreciated for being busy and helpful.

Whilst trying to be an effective supervisor they feel that their ability to do so is restricted through their lack of status and power within the school. They feel that

this is compounded through poor working conditions. There is also confusion about what is expected of them. They express concern that there has been little guidance or interest shown by the Head and teachers, which further undermines their position. They seem to lack confidence to undertake their role as supervisor as they consider appropriate. Instead the supervisors are trying to be what they perceive others want them to be. This situates them in the thorny position of being, as they call themselves, 'in-betweenies', neither a teacher nor a parent but something in-between.

Despite an appreciation of the untenable position they are in supervisors feel powerless to effect change. This is partially due to a perceived lack of a voice within school. There is a sense of detachment from whole school systems. Similarly they feel excluded from the identity of 'school staff' because they have no ownership of space within school.

Due to an alleged lack of status and power there is some attempt to gain this within the team, through the position of 'senior'. This does not however give rise to obvious tension within the team of supervisors. They give the impression that they feel their status and power is threatened by older children. Furthermore the supervisors express a sense of the lunchtime being a battlefield in which teachers and children challenge their status and power.

Supervisors are frustrated by what they perceive to be poor communication and poor collaborative working with them. They consider the Head and teachers responsible for this because supervisors lack the confidence in their status and power to take the initiative.

The relationship supervisors believe they have with teachers is fraught with conflict. Likewise with children, supervisors compare themselves less favourably

to teachers and sense that children do not have the same respect for them. This impinges on supervisors' self-esteem, status and power. Furthermore the supervisors' story suggests a feeling of being undermined and unappreciated by parents. They also think that parents are quick to blame supervisors when problems arise which makes them feel vulnerable. They do however seem to believe that they have a unique knowledge of children unknown to parents, which may give a sense of power.

Feeling undervalued, powerless and having a sense that they are not respected supervisors say that they have to contend with a wide range of practical duties at lunchtime. Demands on their time cause tension and limits their ability to reflect on their practice.

The lunchtime story thus far makes it seem incredulous that supervisors would wish to continue to be placed in this untenable position. However, the account of the supervisors' story continues with an exploration of joy. The foundation of joy comes from being with children and sharing in their lunchtime experiences. This motivates supervisors, as does the diversity of a demanding role. In an apparent contradiction, despite concerns about their self-esteem, status and power, supervisors consider themselves able to manage the demands. They claim themselves to be skilled and reflective practitioners. They believe the basis for these skills lies in their own store of personal qualities which are enhanced through experience.

Through expediency or effort this group of supervisors have forged a particularly cohesive and supportive team. This enhances their personal skills and strengthens their efforts to achieve autonomy and agency. Although not

identified by supervisors, the exclusivity and strength of the team may present as a challenge to other school staff.

In addition to being a team, supervisors have an awareness of children's lunchtime culture. They undertake to merge children's culture into their own culture to create a shared lunchtime culture. Through sharing an understanding in this way supervisors believe that the autonomy and agency of both supervisors and children can be consolidated. Associated with the shared culture is the commitment that supervisors have to getting to know children. Supervisors actively strive to develop relationships with children that respect individual differences. Supervisors believe the nature of these relationships is unique, because they exclusively share the lunchtime with children. The supervisors' story also insinuates that a shared lunchtime culture can cause confusion over roles and collusion with children. Potentially these are compromising issues.

Being skilled practitioners supervisors have confidence that they are able to respond to the challenges presented by the behaviours of some children. This is despite the obstacles of status and power, poor communication and time. They are keen to retain positive relationships with children in their behaviour management styles.

A powerful theme in the supervisors' lunchtime story is a desire to claim ownership of the lunchtime. Supervisors would like to be able to better use their skills and power to control events at lunchtimes. Their motivation for this is to enhance children's autonomy and agency. This would seem to be another contradiction to the concerns for supervisors' self-esteem, status and power. Nonetheless supervisors believe that if given autonomy through ownership they could enrich children's lunchtime experiences.

The ultimate objective in enriching children's lunchtime experiences is to promote children's autonomy and agency. As with supervisors however certain challenges are presented. Some of these stem from assumptions made by the supervisors. Children's experiences may be shaped through the supervisors' assumptions based on children's age, gender, family and previous history. Supervisors are also concerned with the restrictions on children's choices made by the dominance of football. There is the suggestion that this might influence children's identity and feeling of inclusion or exclusion. Taking this further supervisors discuss their observations on the way that children play. They express concern about children restricting their own choices. Supervisors believe that concerns about safety and risk further confine children's lunchtime experiences. They also identify that facilities at lunchtime could be improved.

Despite supervisors' worries about barriers to children's autonomy and agency they consider children to be happy at lunchtime. I have inferred from the supervisors' story that they consider a state of happiness as being a fundamental emotion to autonomy and agency. So too is the celebration of a positive self-esteem, which supervisors believe play at lunchtime facilitates.

Perhaps aware of their own lack of voice, and the inhibiting influence this has, supervisors keenly encourage children to share their views.

At lunchtimes children have ample opportunity to further develop their social skills. Supervisors feel they play an important role in supporting children to improve such skills.

The account of the supervisors' story had earlier depicted concerns about restrictions to children's play. Nonetheless supervisors portrayed children's

lunchtime play as being joyful, imaginative, independent and exciting. They further celebrate play through the association with children's learning.

Supervisors value the provision of space which they believe adds to the choices that children can make. Supervisors believe that adults should trust children to make wise choices in their play and to have a sensible regard for risk within their play.

In trying to make sense of the supervisors' lunchtime experiences I interpreted some of the tertiary themes as being more prominent than others. Significant tertiary themes were: supervisors' joy; the portrayal of children's play; the skill of supervisors and their ability to be reflective; the supportive team; the shared lunchtime culture; knowing children and relationships with children and the supervisors' eagerness to claim ownership of lunchtimes. The thread through all of these, and the other tertiary themes, was supervisors' commitment to nurture and facilitate children's lunchtime experiences. The supervisors' lunchtime story presents a convincing account of their view on the underlying value of lunchtime at school. This value lies in children's present and future autonomy and agency.

### **5.5.2 Conceptual Framework**

The aim of this research was to explore, interpret and understand the supervisors' lunchtime story. The intention was to articulate something about the perceptions and understandings of supervisors.

When describing the analysis process earlier (at 4.3.4) and in particular how the overall summary table emerged (Table 2 at 5.3) I explained how the lack of coherency in my understanding of the supervisors' experiences was initially a concern. However, the double hermeneutic inquiry allowed the meanings of these experiences to be obtained through a process of engagement and

interpretation. I interpreted the supervisors' story to incorporate their desire to establish their own autonomy and agency whilst at the same time trying to facilitate children to develop their autonomy and agency. Furthermore the analysis and the Reflective Diary had identified factors that either challenged or facilitated autonomy and agency. In trying to make sense of the supervisors' story I think that the autonomy and agency of supervisors and children are inexorably linked.

In understanding the supervisors' story of lunchtime it may be helpful to consider a conceptual framework, which draws explicitly from the presentation of the primary, secondary and tertiary themes. This framework presents a coherent and visual representation of the supervisors' lunchtime experiences as I was able to access them through analysis of their collective story shared during interview. This is presented on the following page (Figure 3).



**Figure 3 A conceptual framework to represent the lunchtime supervisors' story of lunchtime**

**Self-esteem** – challenged by their personal feelings and lack of confidence and qualifications. Demonstrated through their desire to feel needed and appreciated.

**Status and Power** – poor working conditions, and lack of role clarity. Feel uninvolved in whole school systems, don't own any space and lack a voice in the school. Limited support for them and their status is challenged by older children. Feel lunchtime is a 'battlefield'.

**Communication** – poor and inconsistent collaboration and communication with other school staff.

**Relationships and Conflict with Teachers** – they sense a lack of interest in their role from teachers and feel undermined.

**Children and Respect** – children perceive supervisors differently to teachers and behave differently with them.

**Conflict with Parents** – they feel undermined, misunderstood and unappreciated by parents.

**Responsibility and Blame** – supervisors want the status and power to manage lunchtimes but are anxious about the potential to be blamed should a problem occur.

**Time** – there is tension between the numerous practical tasks and the desire to be reflective.

**Assumptions** – children's autonomy and agency is challenged by assumptions supervisors make about factors such as age, gender, family and past experiences.

**Dominance of Football** – this restricts the choices other children can make.

**Restrictions to Play** – children's autonomy and agency is limited by influences on their play, the lack of variety in play and poor play skills.

**Facilities** – choice is restricted by poor facilities and resources.

**Safety and Risk** – parents and teachers concerns over risk restrict children's choices.

Themes that Challenge

Themes that Challenge

*Supervisors' autonomy and agency*

*Children's autonomy and agency*

*Supervisors want to develop this so they can facilitate children's autonomy and agency*

*Supervisors consider this to be a significant purpose of lunchtime*

Themes that Strengthen

Themes that Strengthen

**Joy and Motivation** – enjoyment of being with children motivates supervisors.

**Demanding Role** – the challenging nature of the role motivates supervisors and promotes their self-esteem and confidence.

**Skilled and Reflective Practitioners** – they consider themselves to be skilled and capable of autonomy and agency.

**Supportive Team** – there is a strong team identity. They recognise individual differences and they support each other.

**Shared Lunchtime Culture** – supervisors acquire a unique knowledge about lunchtimes which promotes their self-esteem and power. They understand about children's culture, supervisors' culture and the shared culture.

**Knowing Children and Developing Relationships with Children** – their relationship with children is based on their unique understanding of individual children which helps them to facilitate and manage children.

**Management of Behaviour** – they believe they are skilled at management which promotes their autonomy and agency.

**Ownership of Lunchtime** – they try to use their skills and power to control events at lunchtime.

**Happiness** – supervisors consider that children are happy at lunchtime.

**Self-esteem** – children can achieve success through play.

**Voice of the child** – supervisors seek to give children a voice at lunchtimes to promote their autonomy and agency.

**Social Development** – at lunchtime children have ample opportunity to develop their social skills.

**Play** – they observe children to have some control over their own explorative and creative play.

**Learning through Play** – children use play opportunities to learn and also to reinforce learning in the classroom.

**Space** – conveys ownership and promotes autonomy and agency.

**Safety and Risk** – children can learn through taking risks in a relatively safe environment.

**Facilitated and Nurtured** – supervisors believe they have a crucial role in nurturing children which will facilitate their autonomy and agency.

In Chapter 1 I offered an insight into my background. I confirmed that the underlying theoretical orientation of the methodology that I adopted was influenced by social constructionism. The conceptual framework presented in Figure 3 helps to depict how lunchtime may be experienced by supervisors within a complex interacting system. I will now elaborate on this framework and link this to the underlying theoretical assumptions on which this study was based. The supervisors' perspectives on aspects of this system are shaped by the conversations, joint actions, interactions, constraints and possibilities which they identified as constituting their lunchtime experiences.

Significantly the supervisors recognise that they need to acquire a sense of their own autonomy and agency to have the power to support the children's development. From the supervisors' perspective there are lunchtime factors that challenge children's autonomy and agency. The supervisors' understanding of these factors has been shaped by the repertoire of interpretations that are possible in the lunchtime context. For instance the supervisors interpret a challenge from the older children to their status and power, because they seem to perceive a lack of supervisor status and power within the complex interacting school system. Similarly the supervisors construct the poor communication systems to reflect their lack of status and power within school and further interpret this as a challenge to their autonomy and agency. This perception is supported through the anecdotes that the supervisors shared during the interview when they recounted conversations with school staff and past experiences. Similarly the supervisors describe constraints placed on them within the school lunchtime system, in relation to, for instance, the whole school reward and sanction systems. They understand this to be a challenge to their autonomy and agency. Conversely the supervisors construct a lunchtime reality that

incorporates shared experiences, knowledge and understanding between themselves and children. They say this permits them to be in a unique position to know children in a way that is different to how teachers and parents might know them. It is through this that the supervisors feel they can enhance their autonomy and agency. They reinforce their views about challenges to their autonomy and agency in the way that they talk about the social and working relationships within the team, arguing that they have to rely on each other because their role can be lonely. It is partly through the cohesiveness of the team that they can accomplish some degree of autonomy and agency.

The conceptual framework therefore provides a useful visual representation of my understanding of the sense that the supervisors in this study make of their lunchtime experiences within the complex interacting lunchtime system.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Reflections on this Research**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

At the beginning of this account of the research I offered an understanding of my background and lunchtime story. The intention of the research was to explore the supervisors' lunchtime story. The aim was to create a joint story of lunchtime and to reflect on how this added to the existing understanding about supervisors' views. In this chapter I will reflect on aspects of the research:

- **6.2** I will re-visit my lunchtime story and compare it with the results of this study.
- **6.3** I will also consider the review of the existing literature (as presented in Chapter 2) alongside the supervisors' lunchtime story.
- **6.4** The study will be evaluated. This will include discussion on the selected research methods, the conduct of the research and potential impact.

#### **6.2 The Researcher's Lunchtime Story**

My story made certain assumptions about what the supervisors' story might include. I thought that the supervisors' story would assert the role of the supervisor to be challenging. I suggested the story might mention a lack of respect and a feeling of being uninvolved in whole school initiatives. A part of my story was also that supervisors would be able to identify some of their skills but not appreciate the extent of these.

It was anticipated that supervisors would suggest the purpose of lunchtime being about playing, socialising and having a break. I expected supervisors to declare a role in ensuring children play and socialise. My story also considered it likely that supervisors would talk of the need for efficient organisation of lunchtime and the management of behaviour. I expected some discussion of football and quiet or vulnerable children being marginalised.

Despite these concerns I assumed that supervisors would have a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction. My expectation of the supervisors' lunchtime story is that it would be positive about the relationships they have with children.

A comparison of my lunchtime story with the lunchtime story of supervisors that I have discovered reveals some similar features. However, what my story clearly did not grasp was the underlying feeling of wanting to enhance their autonomy and agency. Nor did I appreciate that supervisors would consider children's autonomy and agency. Furthermore my lunchtime story had no notion of the depth of their understanding of the factors that challenge or strengthen autonomy and agency for themselves and for children. On reflection I had not considered these factors at all when thinking about the purpose of lunchtime at school. These are issues that I have explored in the Reflective Diary (Appendix 1).

Despite my considerable involvement with supervisors over many years I did not have an underlying conceptual framework of their views about lunchtimes. This study has enabled me to offer a meaningful account of the view of supervisors. This has also led to the development of a conceptual framework. This framework provides greater insight into the complex interacting lunchtime system as perceived by supervisors and interpreted through the analysis process.

This study has enriched my understanding of the supervisors' lunchtime story.

### **6.3 Existing Research and this Study**

Children's right to play is well established in the background literature review (United Nations, Article 31, 1998). It is emphasised that play is self-directed, pleasurable, flexible, adaptive and creative (DCMS, 2004). Play empowers and encourages autonomy. Play stimulates emotional regulation and resilience (Lester and Russell, 2008). At lunchtime children develop their place and sense of ownership (Ota et al., 1997). Supervisors have a responsibility for children at lunchtime and potentially could therefore have a pivotal role in promoting children's lunchtime play experiences.

The review of the background literature however yielded very little on supervisors' views on this. It was not even known if supervisors had any appreciation of the value of play in general and more specifically play at lunchtime. This present study however provides a new insight into supervisors' views.

The supervisors have shared a story in which they express fulsome appreciation for the wonder of play at lunchtime. The existing literature gave no account of the supervisors' depth of understanding about the value of play at lunchtime. This study has extended the understanding that we have about the value that some supervisors may place on play at lunchtime. Taking this further, schools could take advantage of supervisors' understanding of play and support them to explore how children's lunchtime experiences might be developed. This could involve more than behaviour management and the organisation of lunchtimes which the existing literature tends to focus on (Docking, 1988 and Imich and Jefferies, 1989).

There was a dearth of existing research into supervisors' views more generally. Reports of such studies (for instance Ross and Ryan, 1994) tended to partially reflect supervisors' concerns but did not reflect on the understanding that they have of children's lunchtime experiences and their autonomy. Yet supervisors in this study offered a perspective that the primary objective of lunchtime is to advance children's autonomy and agency. The discussion of the background literature suggested that children develop autonomy and agency through play but it did not emphasise the significance of the unique opportunity that lunchtime provides in order to do this. Moreover the existing literature gave no account of the understanding that supervisors have about the role they might have in facilitating children's autonomy and agency. Again, this study has revealed an innovative perspective on supervisors' views about the function of lunchtime in schools. Hitherto it seemed that supervisors were regarded as possibly having a view on the organisation of lunchtimes and behaviour management but certainly the idea that they may appreciate children's autonomy and agency was not suggested at all.

More than this though, even when it has been suggested that the views of supervisors ought to be sought attempts to do so have been limited and, in my opinion, have not been done in a meaningful way. Instead research has involved supervisors in only a marginal way or with a focus on identifying lunchtime problems. (Docking, 1988; Sharp, 1994; Briggs, et al., 1995)

Within the background literature it was suggested that to develop autonomy and agency children must have confidence to make choices from the range of possibilities understood by the group (Davies, 1993). It was inferred that if the adults are in some way creating the rules as to what the choices might be then they would be indirectly impacting on children's autonomy and agency. It is

suggested in the background literature that children's play is to some extent governed by the collaboration between children and adults (Davies, 1992). There is limited discussion though about how supervisors and children collaborate during lunchtime. The idea that supervisors might or might not be aware of the collaboration is not even raised. Certainly prior to this study it was not clear that supervisors' lunchtime experiences involved an appreciation of the shared nature of the lunchtime context. Within the supervisors' story they suggest an appreciation of the factors that might shape children's choices. They recognise that lunchtime experiences and the supervising adults may both obstruct or enhance children's autonomy and agency. Not only are they aware of the shared nature but on occasion they use it to their advantage.

In making sense of the experiences the supervisors shared in their story I made inferences that lead to the realisation that supervisors understand that they must achieve their own autonomy and agency to be able to enhance children's autonomy and agency. The background literature stopped short at recognising that work on lunchtimes should start with supervisors' self-esteem (Fell, 1994). This study has added significantly to this view. The analysis suggested a wide range of factors directly impinge on supervisors' sense of autonomy and agency that have not previously been highlighted. This includes factors such as the need to feel appreciated, reasons for taking on the role, communication systems, the shared lunchtime culture between supervisors and children and their acute sense of lack of voice and power.

The strength of the team of supervisors was a significant feature of the supervisors' story yet this is not explored in the background literature. The analysis of the supervisors' story in this study offers a unique insight into the potential power and strength of the team.



Moreover, given that supervisor autonomy and agency was a primary theme in the supervisors' story, in this study it is disappointing that the background literature did not identify this at all. However, earlier I explained that this did not occur to me prior to this study, despite my considerable involvement with supervisors' prior to this. Thus this study has led to a novel way of thinking about supervisors' and their views about themselves, their role at lunchtime and their role in promoting children's development. Arguably supervisors may not be able to facilitate the children's autonomy and agency because they themselves haven't achieved it and this aspect is not explored through the supervisors' story.

A component of being able to develop autonomy and agency is being happy. This was another significant theme in the supervisors' story. To some extent the existing literature on lunchtimes presented a bleak picture. It was proposed that some children are unhappy and behaviour and safety is a concern (for instance Mooney, et al., 1991; Kelly, 1994; Smith, 1994). Other studies that give an account of children's enjoyment of lunchtimes were mentioned (e.g. Tizard et al., 1988; Blatchford, 1998). Consistent with this, supervisors in this study share a story in which children are generally happy. Likewise supervisors express their own pleasure in sharing lunchtime with children. Pleasure gained from the role of a lunchtime supervisor has not been proposed in the existing literature.

The general stance adopted by some of the existing literature is about lunchtime problems such as the difficulties presented by poor behaviour. In reviewing the background literature reports were summarised that explored lunchtime problems (for instance Mooney, et al., 1991; Kelly, 1994; Smith, 1994). In some of the studies reviewed responsibility for difficulties was ascribed to lunchtime supervisors (Docking, 1988; Imich and Jefferies, 1989). Various studies made suggestions about improving lunchtimes, some of which had a focus on

changing organisational aspects or training (Imich and Jefferies, 1989; Fell, 1994; Briggs et al., 1995). However there is an alternative view espoused by supervisors in this study. They suggest that some responsibility for lunchtime issues should be attributed more widely within the school system. They justify this contention by depicting their perceptions about their lack of power within the complex interacting lunchtime system. Also, their story suggests that there are deeper underlying issues than organisational factors that need to be addressed. This would include for instance supervisors' self-esteem, relationships and communication. Additionally the supervisors' lunchtime story identifies other aspects which might sustain a lunchtime culture that may contribute to problems at lunchtimes. The story shared by the supervisors for instance portrays an image of them feeling unappreciated, disrespected and powerless. They believe themselves to be 'in-betweenies', of which there was no intimation in the existing literature. This study identifies this 'in-betweenie' perspective and suggests that this may be the cause of some tension for supervisors. An exploration of the position that supervisors hold at a school and measures to clarify this with appropriate status and power ascribed to the role could potentially help to alleviate such tensions. In particular if supervisors are confident in their position their attitude towards older children may change and consequently the lunchtime choices afforded to such children may increase.

Analysis of the supervisors' story did not lead to a conclusion that behaviour was of such significant concern. Certainly supervisors in this study do not deny lunchtime problems but they present an alternative view that is more positive and optimistic. It is also heartening to think that children are being supervised by adults who enjoy their time with them.

Certainly aspects of behaviour are a challenge but supervisors were confident that they possessed the necessary management skills. They also recognised that behaviour management could be improved through collaborative working practices, improved relationships with other school staff and efficient communication. Furthermore supervisors were able to see how their autonomy and agency could be enhanced through being able to manage poor behaviour which is a novel perspective. Studies reviewed as part of the background (Docking, 1988; Imich and Jefferies, 1989) tended to propose training on behaviour management, rather than joint working. There was limited reference to the wealth of skills that supervisors possess or their confidence in managing some behaviour.

Debatably a crucial element to autonomy and agency would be children considering themselves to be learners. The background literature identifies the strength of learning through play (Roderick, et al., 1997; Ota et al., 1997; Broadhead, 2008). Supervisors' views on this had not previously been identified but yet again this study has helped to explore their opinion. Their story made particular reference to how children learn through play. Furthermore, supervisors consider that a break at lunchtime enhances classroom learning. The supervisors' story goes on to reflect the role of the supervisor in assisting learning opportunities for children. Again the role of the supervisor in children's learning through play was barely recognised in the existing research.

The background literature review also included an exploration of children's cultures and adult agendas. It was documented that there are different child and teacher cultures. Children were considered to be able to 'read' adult agendas and work and play within these (Davies 1982; Ota et al., 1997; Brown, 1993). The existing research gives little account of interactions between the different

cultures of the children and supervisors. Furthermore it was claimed that adults were only called into the child's world when things became unmanageable (Davies, 1982). This present study enriches this view through identifying supervisors' appreciation of children's lunchtime culture. It also presents supervisors' lunchtime culture, about which little had previously been explored. Supervisors talk about how the two different cultures coexist and merge. They also assert that rather than simply using adults to solve problems children invite supervisors to share in their lunchtime culture. The analysis of the interviews also revealed how the supervisors' agenda includes certain assumptions which may shape children's identity (such as the influence of family).

In terms of the role of a supervisor the background literature was unclear on the expectations. The various job descriptions that were reviewed for instance emphasised domestic and practical duties and behaviour management. Yet supervisors in this study shared a much broader role which encompasses nurturing children and facilitating their autonomy and agency.

It is apparent that in the existing literature lunchtime is considered to be a valuable and potentially enjoyable opportunity for children to play, develop emotionally, socialise and learn. It is these opportunities from which children's sense of autonomy and agency will develop. It was reported in the review of the background literature that lunchtime supervisors have unique lunchtime experiences and their views should be sought (White and Wilkinson, 1986; Docking, 1988; Blatchford, 1989; Blatchford and Sharp, 1994). Contrary to this suggestion actually little is known about the views of supervisors. Interestingly one of the concerns expressed by supervisors in this study was a perceived lack of voice. This study has given supervisors an opportunity to share their views through which they have enriched the existing understanding about lunchtimes.

Further, it has offered a fairly in-depth understanding of supervisors' experiences and views that is significantly distinct from anything that had been suggested through previous research. This study proposes some unique insights into the supervisors' 'lived in world'. If considered with a willingness to adopt a phenomenological attitude, which retains a wonder and openness to the results of this study, alongside a willingness to restrain pre-understandings (Finlay, 2008) this study offers a new way of thinking about supervisors' perspectives on their lunchtime experiences.

## **6.4 Evaluation**

### **6.4.1 Introduction**

To evaluate this research there are some essential questions to be asked about whether the research question was answered using suitable methods. It is important also to consider the way in which the research was conducted. Furthermore the potential impact of the research should be considered.

### **6.4.2 The Aim of the Research**

The aim of this research was to offer a unique insight into the lunchtime story of a group of lunchtime supervisors. I stated that this would be facilitated through semi-structured group interviews with one group of supervisors from one primary school to discover their collective lunchtime story. An understanding of their lunchtime story was to be sought by way of analysis. IPA was considered to be consistent with the social constructionist assumptions that underpinned this study. I proposed to consider the results of the analysis alongside my personal lunchtime story and the existing literature.

The aim of the current study has been met. The focus group interview made it feasible to access an account of the supervisors' perspectives on lunchtime. In conjunction with the Reflective Diary, IPA was an effective approach to apply to the analysis of the interviews. The analysis produced an organised, detailed plausible and persuasive account of the supervisors' perspectives on their lunchtime experiences.

A key finding was that the supervisors' lunchtime story has a core principle that children's lunchtime experiences can impact on their present and future

autonomy and agency. Another key finding was that supervisors believe they need to acquire a sense of their own autonomy and agency to support children.

Reflecting on the outcomes of this study I am convinced that supervisors should be given a voice to meaningfully express their views, feelings and perspectives on lunchtimes in schools.

#### **6.4.3 Observations on Method**

Basing the research on a case study means that the outcomes primarily relate to that particular group of supervisors. However, given the research was about *their* story it was appropriate to research a single case study. The case study allowed access into a specific lunchtime story.

The outcome of the study was qualitative data which provided insights into supervisors' needs, expectations, attitudes, beliefs and feelings. From this key themes were identified. The case study focus group facilitated this through the social interaction within the group which yielded freer and more complex responses. Being a part of a group provided some security and prompted spontaneity. Working with a focus group facilitated a collaborative approach and provided access to the supervisors' collective story. The group interview encouraged interactions that created the rich story which might not have been discovered through individual interviews. The way in which the research was conducted was sensitive to supervisors and engaged them in conversation, which is a natural activity. I am confident that power issues were minimised.

I am aware that the way in which some of the questions were posed may have helped to shape the story. This has been explored through the Reflective Diary. However, I would assert that underlying themes of supervisors' and children's agency and autonomy would have emerged whatever the questions. Similarly I

believe that the secondary and tertiary themes would have become apparent. It was not the detail of the answers to the questions necessarily but rather the supervisors' underlying views on lunchtime issues more generally which shaped their story.

The focus group interview was relatively easy to undertake however this relied on my experience and confidence of working with supervisors and of interviewing generally. Another difficulty with interviewing is the discrepancy between what people say and what people do. However, this research was not about corroboration but more about the story supervisors wanted to share.

In Chapter 1 I outlined the theoretical underpinning of this study. I recognised that supervisors are situated in a unique context and are part of a complex interacting school system. This system would involve various elements of consensus and conflict. I suggested that there was no single lunchtime reality but that the lunchtime reality would be contingent upon each individual's situation and the context. Therefore, if the aim of the study was to explore the supervisors' story, it was important to take account of the context and the interactions that take place within it. A case study was undertaken because this allowed the analysis to take account of the context. Consistent with this the interviews and analysis were undertaken at a group level in recognition of there being no single lunchtime reality but rather a collectively constructed lunchtime reality. Using this group approach meant that the interviews were dynamic and interactive. It is possible that individuals felt more confident being interviewed in the group context in a way that they might not have if interviewed individually. Comments of others in the group may have stimulated thoughts and led to further contributions. The supervisors' were able to question each other and probe further. Within the interview they attempted to interpret and understand their



experiences. The supervisors were able to reveal and explore their individual and their shared understandings, experiences and feelings about the lunchtime consensus and conflict issues. Similarly the subsequent analysis of the interviews considered individual differences but more importantly the analysis was able to investigate and unravel their collective lunchtime reality. The result was a coherent lunchtime story that generated a conceptual framework to portray the collectively constructed lunchtime reality as situated within the complex interacting school system.

Being able to explore the supervisors' collective story through the group interview and analysis is, I believe, the strength of this study. I appreciate that the cohesiveness of this particular team of supervisors facilitated the confident, relaxed and honest sharing of views in the interviews. The same approach may not be as effective with another group of supervisors. It was also fortunate that all individuals within the team were able to express their views as no one person dominated. I was confident therefore that I was able to access the perceptions of all of the supervisors and not just one or two individuals. Again, this might not be the case with another group of supervisors.

Within the focus group the supervisors were not acting in isolation. Rather they were members of a social group who interacted with each other. Thus the focus group interview became in itself a social context. This then adds another layer to the notion that lunchtimes are socially constructed within the school system.

Perhaps what occurred within the focus group interviews was that the lunchtime reality was created in a way that might be different to how it is created and experienced on a day by day basis. Furthermore I recognise that in adopting this group interview and analysis approach as opposed to individual interviews and the separate analysis of each interview it is possible that alternative lunchtime

stories remain hidden. Whilst I was confident that individual supervisors felt able to question, challenge or disagree with each other during the interviews it is possible that the desire to conform may have restricted the sharing of some individual experiences and feelings.

In conducting the interviews with the group of supervisors I observed that there was some quite detailed and specific information as the supervisors discussed a particular issue in some depth. Some of this was difficult to meaningfully analyse. Possibly this may have been less likely to occur in an individual interview, though not necessarily so.

I have attempted to reflect on both the strengths and the weaknesses of using the group rather than an individual approach to the interviews and subsequent analysis. Ultimately I am confident that the social interaction within the group yielded freer and more complex responses. In my view the supervisors' conversations during the interviews have face validity due to the clarity of the context and the detail of their discussion.

In addition to the focus group interviews an observation was carried out to provide a joint reference between myself and the supervisors. The field notes were not shared with supervisors. Instead I selected some aspects of my notes to ask questions about. There was no intention to withhold information it was simply easier. This is likely to have shaped the story that supervisors shared. Had supervisors had access to the field notes a different discussion may have taken place at the second interview.

Mid-point during the analysis of the interviews I engaged with some member validation. Member validation is a complicated issue given that IPA is avowedly interpretative. However, returning to supervisors was in the spirit of on-going

inquiry. Supervisors were able to offer their thoughts on my thoughts. This gave me confidence that the initial interpretation of what they had shared during interview was a reflection of what they wished to convey. It provided a further opportunity to confirm with supervisors that their views were valued.

According to IPA it is possible that another researcher with different personal characteristics, experiences, research background and theoretical beliefs would have facilitated different conversations between supervisors. Likewise a different interpretation of the interview is possible. Because IPA maintains that there are potentially multiple accounts of the data this does not mean that any one account is incorrect. Each analysis is a unique interaction between researcher and participants. Furthermore supervisors were not sampled as being representative of a general population of supervisors.

#### **6.4.4 Conduct of the Research**

In conducting this research I endeavoured to be respectful and sensitive towards supervisors and their story.

Considerable commitment has been demonstrated through prolonged engagement with the analysis of the transcripts. I have made every effort to be rigorous in the data collection and in the analysis. This has involved contemplative and empathic exploration.

To be transparent in the way in which the analysis was undertaken a detailed account has been given in Chapter 4 (4.3.4). Additionally my contemplative approach has been thoroughly described in the Reflective Diary, which also demonstrates reflexivity.

The value of this study lies in the outcomes of the dynamics of the group. Ideas which may have been generated by the group might not have occurred to any one individual or any other group. This study gave a group of supervisors an opportunity to share their story. Through the double hermeneutic process I have constructed themes to provide a coherent account of their story. Another group of supervisors may have a different lunchtime story to share. Another researcher with a different background to my own may have interpreted the story of the supervisors in this study in a different way. It would not therefore be possible to generalise the outcomes. However the power of this current study is the light it sheds within a broader context. As suggested in the earlier discussion about IPA (Chapter 3, part 3.4.3) the outcomes of this study may not provide absolutes but rather transferable insights (Smith, 2008).

Thus, whilst it is accepted that the outcomes of this study may not be representative, this research is not offering a simplistic argument about supervisors' views that can be applied to any situation. Instead it presents an account of the supervisors' understanding of their lunchtime experiences. It presents themes which invite consideration. As such the study has presented a novel and challenging perspective which opens up a new way of understanding lunchtimes and the views of supervisors.

#### **6.4.5 Potential Implications of this Study on Practice**

It is vital that research should have some impact and make a contribution to fundamental theory or knowledge. There was a paucity of existing research literature into the views of lunchtime supervisors. This study has provided a plausible and coherent account of such views and has presented a conceptual framework for understanding the supervisors' story of lunchtime. This can add to

the corpus of existing knowledge on lunchtimes and be considered alongside other work on lunchtimes in schools. It might also be considered alongside research into the lunchtime stories of other supervisors at other schools. These could be investigated through an approach similar to that I have adopted in this study. Similarly bringing together supervisors from different schools would generate alternative perspectives. It might also be interesting to consider the lunchtime stories of supervisors alongside those of children, teachers and parents.

This present study offers a unique and interesting insight into the views of a group of lunchtime supervisors and their story of lunchtime. This story is to be valued for itself. However, I am aware that in having an understanding of the supervisors' story there is potential to have some impact on the experiences of supervisors and children. The supervisors' story of lunchtime as presented in the conceptual framework has highlighted some key issues which may require further consideration.

### Selection and on-going professional development

The story presented by supervisors in this study suggests that an intuitive and 'gut feeling' approach is advantageous. It also suggests that supervisors need to be skilled and reflective practitioners. Moreover, supervisors may have a pivotal role in facilitating children's autonomy and agency. The convenience of the appointment without a proper selection process may require review.

There ought to be on-going professional development opportunities facilitated by somebody who understands the nature of their role. Professional development should focus on individual school and supervisor needs. Peer support might form a part of this within a structured framework which would include allocated time.

Individual schools may wish to identify key specific training needs (such as First Aid and physical intervention).

It may be helpful for supervisors and other school staff to explore core values beliefs and attitudes. It may be helpful to consider how these impact on children's autonomy and agency.

Attempts to review and improve practices in individual schools may wish to consider some of the key themes identified in this study. This would include exploring issues around self-esteem, the status and power of the supervisor and communication and collaborative working. It would be helpful to explore ways in which the views of lunchtime supervisors could be expressed.

### Role clarity

All school staff should have a shared understanding of the purpose of lunchtimes. The role of the lunchtime supervisor needs to be clarified and agreed. Through collaborative consultation with school staff supervisors would benefit from permission to have ownership of lunchtimes within certain parameters set out in a job description.

More closely defining their role could address issues around the 'in-betweenie' status which supervisors may feel they have.

Issues around the time allocated to fulfil certain lunchtime duties should be reviewed.

## **Developing a Supportive Team**

Building on the strengths of individual supervisors schools may wish to consider how they would facilitate supervisors in developing a cohesive and supportive team.

## **Relationships and Culture**

Within school it may be possible to create an ethos which supports the autonomy and agency of supervisors and children. Opportunities should be found to develop relationships between supervisors and other school staff, parents and children. This would enhance mutual respect, support and collaborative working.

Supervisors had identified the strengths that emerge from an understanding of the different and shared lunchtime cultures. Harmony between these should be sought through recognition, compromise and flexibility. Conflicts that might occur through a shared culture should be identified.

Children's opinions should be sought and valued.

## **An Enriched Lunchtime Environment**

Within an ethos of understanding and respect, children's emotional and social skills may be enriched. Similarly improvements to play facilities would enhance children's play opportunities. An enriched lunchtime environment would provide valuable opportunities for children to learn through play.

## **Concluding Remarks**

This study therefore has the potential to enhance understanding of the sense lunchtime supervisors make of their experiences at lunchtime. This is presented

as a conceptual framework. I have suggested how this understanding might be further developed through other research. I have also offered suggestions on how the outcomes of this study might shape the professional development of lunchtime supervisors and the lunchtime practices in schools to promote a positive lunchtime culture. Within this culture there is the potential for children to enjoy lunchtimes and develop their present and future autonomy and agency.



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## **Appendix 1**

### **The Reflective Diary**

#### **Purpose of diary**

The Reflective Diary consists of memo notes to myself to help me to think about particular issues, have personal dialogue and reflect on the assumptions and the way that the data had been interpreted. Specifically, I used the diary to reflect on the level of analysis that is being presented (descriptive, ideographic, summative, interpretative), and why, and to consider where the interpretation came from (existing theory, practice, personal views, novel or emergent ideas). The diary was particularly useful in exploring bias. The diary was started just before the research data was collected and was continued during the analysis of the data.

#### **Initial and ongoing personal thoughts**

What am I going to do? What is it all about? I am constructing the lunchtime reality with supervisors but I am going back to check what they said. I am, 'sculpting' it with them. I have come with my ideas and my views which must be acknowledged. Reflexivity. Change isn't the aim but I know that things may change as a result of talking together and with me.

It's about jointly working out together what lunchtime supervision is about, the core of the job, what is underneath the telling offs, the wiping spills, the standing around.

I am interested in the quality of what they say – the richness of it. I want to try to access their account. I think I've got a bit of the story. I want to talk with them, observe them and talk some more to add to my understanding of their story.

Then I want to stand back from it all, look back over it, stand back again, and look back over again. This will help me to get more of the story, to try to understand it, describe it. Robust. What do they mean by that? Could it be this? Why? Could it be that? Why? If it were this what would it mean?

'Lunchtime supervisors'- reinforces the idea that they are there to supervise those aspects that are to do with lunch i.e. the queuing, getting food, clearing up afterwards, doing this in a timely way. Some call them mid-day supervisors, would this be better? I know from talking with some supervisors that they like to be called, 'dinner ladies', because, 'that's what we are', 'it's what we've always been called', 'it's what everybody knows us by'.

I know that there will be some parts that I cannot check out in any way – it is about their views, for example they may say that there is a lack of status or respect and I've no way of knowing if that is true, or even if it is something about the way that they do their job, or something about them personally that means they do not gain respect. I have to accept the limitations of what I can do, but perhaps reflect on it from time to time. At least acknowledge that it is/maybe an issue.

What I hope to be doing is exploring:

- My story.
- Their story.
- Our joint story.

Early in the write up I need to outline where I'm coming from.

- Then their views.
- Then come back to my story.

- Was I, 'right'?

I am trying to explore a story of lunchtimes. Finding out. Exploring the process.

But I must remember it's their job. It's what they spend part of each day doing.

They get paid for it. They may even get some status for it (at home, in the community, amongst their friends). They may get some personal esteem from it.

I do not want to spoil this is anyway by doing this research. It needs to enrich all of this, I think. Will I be enriching things for them, by involving them in the research? My initial chats with them suggest I will be. They are delighted.

### **Thoughts on the interviews**

I want to think about some of the dynamics of the interviews. One of the supervisors was male. Would this affect the dynamics of the group? Would this cause a power issue between the male supervisor and the female researcher? This did not actually seem to be an issue. The conversation seemed to be as easy as it had been with the initial study and there was nothing about the male supervisor's presentation that suggested issues over power. Everybody seemed very comfortable with each other.

One of the female supervisors was senior. Potentially others might have deferred to her in the interview or been wary of offering an opinion. Again, this did not appear to be an issue. There was some challenge and debate on certain things that she said. It seems that she became senior by virtue of being there the longest and the others were happy for her to take this role. There were positive and respectful relationships between all of the supervisors. They saw having a senior as strength in terms of behaviour management (being able to use a hierarchical approach) and for communication with the Head Teacher. They also said that they liked somebody to 'be in charge' to help them to make decisions.

One of the supervisors was of a more dominant personality and might be inclined to talk more than some of the others. This is something that had to be sensitively managed as there were times when it was a difficulty during interview. I adopted various strategies, such as openly asking what others thought of something, or looking directly at another supervisor as a prompt for them to speak. I was confident that all of the supervisors were keen to contribute.

### **Reading the interviews**

I've looked at various ways of analysing the data but they feel somehow inadequate for what I want to do. I'm trying to immerse myself (a bit like Alice in Wonderland) amongst the data. I do not want to lose the richness of what they are talking about. I'm a little bothered that sometimes when I look at the transcript it depends on my mood as to how I interpret. I'll need to keep looking at it, again and again, to neutralise (as it were) the impact of my emotional state. I'm getting lost in searching through literature and reading about analysing qualitative data.

I want to explore core feelings and attitudes so I want something that feels, 'right' to me, which intuitively I am comfortable with whatever I try to do with the data. I suppose it's like putting on a pair of comfy slippers. I know that Dr Scholl may have some perfectly, scientifically comfortable shoes, but they just do not feel right to me. I need my not quite perfect but feel good slippers.

How trustworthy is my story going to be? Of course I can trust it – it's their story – it's what they think, it isn't relevant if they've got it, 'wrong'.

My story is a growing one. I have started from one point and I'm moving. It's like shifting sands, not too fast and it's not shifting the picture totally I'm glad to say. I



had one chapter in terms of my views and experiences, then I talked to them and got another and then observed and the colours were added and then I talked some more and the colours became more vivid. I realise it's like a rainbow. I can stand back and see what I think I can see. I strain my eyes and the colours become more vivid, and I think I can see where the rainbow is going. I look away for a moment, then back, and have to re-focus my vision again. But all the time I can not quite see the end of the rainbow, I can not quite see where it starts, I do not know what made it, but it's there, it's relevant, it has a reality. That's what lunchtime supervision is about, or at least that's what an outsiders view of lunchtime supervision is about. I'm getting poetic with my thoughts here – need a break.

### **Checking with my tutor**

Met with Liz. I liked what she was saying. She is like a guide taking me down a path that I want to be taken down. She's helping me to find my comfy slippers so that I can enjoy the view of the rainbow.

Write notes about what I am trying to get out of it.

What lies behind their experiences – what makes them say that?

Be confident – what I think is fine.

But always ask myself why I am choosing that step, rather than another one.

Why did I think it was right?

Get inside their perspectives.

I've got an idea of some themes but I need to be open to new themes. Okay I may not use them in the end but that's fine. Use the actual words they say.

Later look at the literature to back up what I've done. This will give me the structure/rationale for it.

### **Re-visit the interviews**

I've left things for quite a while now. Busy with life/work. Picking things up again is hard but it's interesting how I read different things in the transcripts. Different things that people said during the interview seem to stand out more for me now.

I'm kneeling on the floor. Highlighter pens in hand. Colouring like mad is the best description I can give. I get excited when I see themes emerging. I colour, then think of something different and want to put that comment in a different colour. This is what understanding the data is about. It's so frustrating at times. I have to walk away, come back and look again. This process is repeated.

I'm trying to go through the transcripts to colour code themes, but keep getting lost in the inference bit and cognitively clustering things together (e.g. facilitator – learning, play, social). I think that I need to just go through the transcripts and annotate with what comes to mind, and then go back and back again.

Actually, now I'm realising that by highlighting certain words/phrases I am actually distorting my view of the interviews. If for instance I highlight something that suggests supervisors think of lunchtimes being about physical needs then I cannot easily later ascribe that same set of words to another category, such as perhaps the supervisors having a core belief that children need exercise, or that the supervisors believe that the teachers think this, or whatever. It's like I've fixed it into a box. This isn't particularly helpful and doesn't allow me to re-visit the interviews. It doesn't help me to be open to new insights. I'm going to stop highlighting parts of the interviews.

Reminder to myself - I'm interrogating the interviews by reading them. I will return more to the way that IPA suggests the analysis should be done. I'll write in the left margin things that strike me. I'll do this for the whole of Interview 1. Then I'll go back, check it. Anything I'm missing? Then I'll try to write a theme word or phrase that captures what I've written on the left, and write this on the right. When this has been checked, and checked, I'm going to write all of the right handed things on to individual post-its. Then I'll leave them. Turning to Interview 2 I'll do the same thing. When I have the two sets of post-its I will try to cluster them. I've decided not to do any clustering of Interview 1 post-its because I do not want to taint my thinking when I do the Interview 2 analysis. I've seen how easily I can get trapped into certain themes by highlighting so I do not want to fall into this again.

Been reading more about IPA – need to ensure that my analysis is:

- Organized
- Detailed
- Plausible and Persuasive
- Transparent.

I need to give an account of the meaning of the data.

This phenomenological emphasis on experience recognises that meaning is first constructed jointly by participant and researcher during data collection and then acknowledges the subsequent interpretive role of the researcher during data analysis. It recognises the, 'insider's perspective'. This is just what I hope to be doing here, as I read and analyse. Must remind myself though that I am trying to get at their perspective, through my eyes.

I'm reading the interviews again, and noting down interesting things. Different layers, the supervisors, the children, the teachers and the school system, are building up (like a high rise building). There is an interplay and connection between them and of course conflict. Which layer/s drives which other layer/s? I do not think it's as simple as this but an interesting idea.

I'm looking at the transcripts but feel somehow that they do not lend themselves well to the emphasis, the pauses, the humour, the flow and the exchange between the supervisors. It's being there and actually listening to them that give the, 'richness'. I'll have to discuss this when evaluating the research. Also, I cannot help but wonder why I did not pick up on certain things that supervisors said. However I know that there were times when the conversation about a particular issue was sought of, 'wound up' by the supervisors so to ask another question about it would have felt false. That's okay, I think. I wanted them to guide me around their role and share their story rather than me interjecting with my interests and agenda. I do wonder though why I interjected with certain questions (such as the one about behaviour strategies). I seem to have influenced their story a bit here.

The writing in the left margin takes ages and ages. I'm wondering does any of this make a difference. What is the point of it all? I have to say though - I'm fed up reading those transcripts. I do need to have a break from it all I think. I need a fresh pair of eyes to be open to ideas.

### **A month later**

No, I can demonstrate the richness. I need to identify patterns in what they said, draw together some sort of structure and then produce a narrative account of the

structure. Episode by episode analyses of the transcripts – inference and conjecture become the, 'data'.

At the very least I think there has been a change in me. I am trying far more than I did before, or at least was aware that I was doing before, of pausing and thinking what lies beneath things that people say to me. Not always of course but sometimes, either as soon as somebody says it or even later, when I have a moment. Naturally the old LOFT syndrome comes into play (Limited Opportunities for Thinking - it's a, 'syndrome' that I've coined to try to encourage me to do more thinking/reflecting).

I'm a bit nervous about analysing these interviews. What if my interpretations are wrong? What if their story has been created by the very first question that I asked? I asked them about the purpose of lunchtimes – they may never have thought of this before but I've suggested to them that they do. They may simply be responding with what they assume I would expect as a reply. I do not know though – perhaps if they talk more about the purpose – if this idea comes out in other things that they say this would give me greater confidence in their initial responses. I'll have to check, and re-check, to look for trends.

I have checked through the transcript and am now confident that the supervisors do think about the purpose of lunchtimes and that it would probably have been a part of their story even if I had not asked that direct question. They go on to talk about learning and social skills for instance in other parts of the interviews. I suppose it's wise to think about this though. What we ask, the way we ask it and the order in which we ask can influence the story that somebody shares with us.

Find it hard to separate description/interpretation. I seem to do them simultaneously. Even as I read things spring to mind that might ultimately

become a theme, for example, 'We', (do not know what else to call this at moment) seems to be a theme. This involves mutual support, conflict with teachers and children. Shared responsibility. I think that what I need to do is keep the Reflective Diary to hand and jot things in it as I think them. I do not want to lose my thoughts so no matter how daft or ill formed I will record them and I can sort them out later.

### **Another month goes by**

Just been reading Davies book (1993, Shards of Glass). She writes of a lovely idea. 'Palimpsest'.

*'This is a term to describe the way in which new writings on a parchment were written over or around old writings that were not fully erased. One writing interrupts the other, momentarily overriding, intermingling with the other; the old writing influences the interpretation of the imposed new writing and the new influences the interpretation of the old. But both still stand, albeit partially erased and interrupted. New discourses do not simply replace the old as on a clean sheet. They generally interrupt one another, though they may also exist in parallel, remaining separate, undermining each other perhaps, but in an unexamined way'. (p11).*

This strikes such a chord with me. Each time I look at the transcripts and scribble my interpretations onto them I worry that I can not quite separate the new idea from the old one. But Davies is right – this is the richness of it, the different ideas should interrupt each other, influence each other and it's the layering that is of such interest to me.

But – here's a thought am I just to trying to find out what they think because then we can intervene to improve children's experiences or am I interested in their views, full stop. Is that value enough?

Actually, I thought about this over night. I am interested in what they think. This isn't about improving children's experiences. In fact much of what they say is about them in the interviews. I am being honest in what I am trying to do in this research, and in the analysis. I've also been thinking about the terms that are used, 'playground' for instance, suggests that it is an area that is solely for the use of play, it suggests it doesn't have anything to do with learning, perhaps. When I look back at the interviews though the supervisors make references to learning during lunchtime so they do not limit their thinking to, 'play'.

### **Reflecting and reminding myself about the analysis**

I've been thinking more about doing the analysis. There is some tolerance of ambiguity and contradictions but that's okay as it's a reflection of the social reality being investigated.

Remember this is double hermeneutic – questioning and critical. I've looked back at how I said I would interpret the transcripts. In the early stages I want to think about how what they are saying can be summarised but I also need to think about what is underlying their comments. How does it compare with what I've already analysed? In the interpretation I need to ask myself questions about what it means and why they talked about it. I need to consider what the existing literature has to say about that. When clustering the themes I will look for things that seem to naturally fall together and consider how I might understand and explain exceptions. What seems a main cluster and what seems subordinate, and why? How do things seem to cluster – conceptually, temporally and

contextually? I'll need to keep coming back to this to remind myself of what I am trying to do. I will also have to keep looking back with the actual transcripts to check if what I am saying is grounded in the supervisors' conversations. I must also ask myself if it makes sense. Does it answer the research question? Is the analysis sufficiently interpretative? Can the interpretative account be seen to develop from a phenomenological core? Is the structure clear and meaningful?

I have to do the analysis in chunks of time. I get tired and worry that I might miss something though doing the different levels of analysis will help me to be more thorough. I also worry about over interpreting and reading too much into things. I need to make sure there are threads through the interviews that back up whatever interpretation I make of what they say. Again I think the different levels of analysis will help me to ground the analysis in the actual words used by supervisors.

Now I am worrying about how to record the analysis of the two different interviews. The problem is that I do not want to separate them but do I have Interview 2 as a continuation of Interview 1 and thus have very big line numbers to deal with? Alternatively I could do them separately but then the reader could be confused wondering if I was talking about a particular line number for Interview 1 or 2. I've realised too that in the write up I will have line numbers for the interviews and line numbers for the diary (possibly). I am going to have to try to think of some simple coding system to make it clear which interview I am referring to. What a dilemma. Often it is these seemingly trivial matters that take up a lot of thinking time (for me anyway). I just want the interviews, the analysis and the write up to be easily accessible to the reader, and to me. I also want the analysis of the interview to be manageable.



I've given this some thought and tried out different ways of doing it. Ultimately I have decided that the important thing here is about the analysis. Therefore I am going to do the two interviews separately because I do not want the shape of the outcomes of the analysis of Interview 1 to shape the analysis of Interview 2 (I've already learned the mistake of this when I tried the colour coding in the initial stage). I have also decided to split the Reflective Diary into Parts. Part 1 is the analysis of Interview 1 and Part 2 is the analysis of Interview 2. Part 3 will be about the sorting and clustering of themes. In the write up I will therefore potentially have references such as, Line 102 (Interview 1) and Line 384 (Diary Part 2). This may well all change as I may find it clumsy.

### **Reflective Diary Part 1: Finally, a record of the personal dialogue during the analysis of Interview 1**

As I am analysing the interviews I make notes to myself, about themes, or my thoughts on my interpretations of what the supervisors say. The headings I'm using are fairly arbitrary and just help me to structure my thoughts and my writing. These may well change; it's just a record of what I am thinking at the time.

### **General and initial thoughts**

As I read the transcript ideas half form in my mind. One of these is that I sense the supervisors recognise a need to support the teachers to fulfil their role. They want to know what the teachers expect of them and they want to be left, to be trusted to get on with it. I think the supervisors want some autonomy and some appreciation of what they do.

I sense conflict in a number of areas. Firstly there is the conflict between having so much to do and a desire to facilitate children's play, learning and social interaction. They cannot do it all. Secondly I sense a conflict in terms of what the supervisors' think that teachers expect of them, how they communicate with them and involve them in decision making. I do not know if this is a status issue.

I am also struck with the pleasure that supervisors seem to get from being around the children. I had not anticipated this at all. Nor had I anticipated that the supervisors would talk about the different agendas that the children and they have, or how there is some shared understanding between them.

### **Nature of Play**

Line 4. 'To play, to play as children'. What lies underneath this? Are they suggesting that children sometimes play in some way other than, 'as children'? I wonder if they are referring to the characteristics of play i.e. being within the children's choice, creative (etc). Or am I reading more into this, perhaps it was just a flippant phrase. I'll see what else they say about the way that children play.

### **Purpose of lunchtime**

Line 3. First (primary?) reason given for having lunchtime is about letting off steam, to chill out. They mention it again later, when discussing wet play (Line 1607).

Line 13. If children do not get out they are a, 'bit hyper'.

Line 5. They also feel that part of their job is about giving teacher's a rest, so they are there to support them.

## **Obligation/Permission**

Line 3, 5, 8. They use language (let, give, get) that suggests their experiences of supervising is about permitting children, or being obliged to let them do something. It is within their power to let children do something.

Line 453. 'Getting them through their dinners'.

Line 830. 'Ensuring that they do things they have to do'.

The supervisors can chose to give or withhold permission. They are the powerful ones at lunchtimes.

'You have to allow this', (Line 1608).

Line 1663. 'Definitely, because we're letting the teachers have their time...'. It's as though they feel they are bestowing time to the teachers. It's also about recognising teachers need a break and supporting them to take this break.

## **Lack of confidence or experience in expressing their views**

Lines 3, 17, 20, 483. Thinking about their language use again. 'I think', 'I think anyway', 'as you say', 'I don't know, I think we do'. They seem uncertain, perhaps worried about expressing a confident view and wanting support from others. Why do they lack confidence? Or haven't their views been asked for before?

Line 1895. 'It's surprising isn't it, when you get started there's so much to say. I didn't realise just how much we did'.

## **Links with learning**

Lines 9-13, 16, 18-19. When talking about the purpose of lunchtimes there are clear links with learning (needing a break from learning, help with their learning, settle, switch off). I'm both surprised and delighted that the supervisors make this connection between lunchtimes and the benefits for children's learning. This is certainly discussed in the background literature about the value of lunchtimes in schools. Additionally in the literature review there is recognition that formal education experiences inform children's play. The supervisors describe a time when a class topic on the Fire of London influenced children's play at lunchtime (Line 394).

The, 'switch off', (Line 19) is interesting – do they think that children need this – do they view the learning experiences for children in class to be something that is stressful in some way? They return to this idea in Line 311, 'Not having to put up with any bother or worry about schoolwork'.

Line 282. They reinforce this idea, 'The learning just carries on, but in a different way'.

Line 284. This sort of links with the idea of the supervisors knowing children, and in a sense there is an element of secrecy or an adult agenda that is not known to the children, '...and they don't even know they're learning. Just as well really, cos if they did, they would stop'.

## **Self-esteem of children**

Line 53. They recognise that some children find class work hard but may gain success on the playground. So, time on the playground can boost a child's self-esteem. Another point here is that the supervisors regard lunchtimes as a time of

success for children (not consistent with the view in some of the literature about the problems that lunchtimes create).

### **Lunchtime world closed to researcher**

Line 19. 'You see' suggests they are explaining the lunchtime world to me as an outsider. They know that I do not really know what it's like at lunchtimes.

### **Obvious purpose of lunchtime**

Line 33. 'Social skills' simple, plain statement. It's almost as though it requires no explanation. If a miracle happened they'd like the children to mix, have little arguments and sort them out between themselves, without it getting out of hand (Line 1882).

They also say that they are there to help the children to play, 'I think that's part of our job...'. '...the ones who don't know how to play are the ones that don't know how to socialise either', (Line 1849). The supervisors are telling me that they are there show the children, to teach them, how to play and socialise. This is very important to them but it isn't what comes across in the job descriptions that I researched. In the literature review there was not mention of supervisors having a sense of responsibility for promoting children's social skills.

### **They know the children and develop relationship with children**

Lines 21-25. Implies that they observed children talking to each other, and know what the content of their conversations are. They are in a privileged position of knowing what children do and say.

Lines 42-46. The supervisors again seem to be communicating here that they know children, and they think this is important.

I think there may be another layer to knowing children. I do not think it's necessarily just about being better able to respond to their needs. At Line 1456 they admit that they know background to children's lives and they know things about their families. They say they talk about this amongst themselves but, '...you wouldn't talk to others about it', (Line 1456). It's as though they are holders of information that others do not have. Perhaps this makes them feel more powerful. They also make assumptions about families on the basis of things that they claim to know, 'Well you know why he's messing about don't you? You should see what the behaviour is like at home. The dad is always swearing', (Line 1458). 'A lot of that comes, when you listen to them, it comes from the parents', (Line 1724). However they also use this information in a nurturing way, 'If like you know things aren't good between the mam and dad you'll maybe watch out for them', (Line 1471). The influence of the family is identified in the research that I reviewed.

Line 44. 'They like to help more'. How do the supervisors know this? Could this be about children knowing that helping out gains praise and adult approval? Are the children reading the adult agenda? Is this about the supervisors wanting to think that children want to help as this gives the children some intrinsic satisfaction? The background literature that I reviewed suggested children would discover adult agendas and behave accordingly.

Line 51. They talk of the children feeling good when they help out but how do they know? Is this about them feeling good seeing children doing something nice so they assume that the children must feel good too? Is this about them reinforcing the notion that they know the children? The idea of children being aware of the supervisors' agenda and working with it in parallel with their own agenda was discussed in the background literature.

Line 57. 'We know who they are don't we'. Again they know the children.

Lines 457-465. They describe understanding a child's needs for discretion and how they treat the children individually.

When asked later about how they have changed over time as a supervisor they explain that with time, '...you get to know the kids and you know which ones you can be silly with. And which ones you have to be firm with and which ones you can be daft with', (Line 1505). Again they are telling me that they know the children and respond differently to individuals. They use humour and sound as though they have fun with children.

Lines 607-623. When asked about being an effective supervisor they feel strongly that you have to know children and be sensitive to their individual needs. Equally the children know and can read the adults (shared culture). The adults have to be one step ahead of the children.

When I asked about reward systems in school the supervisors talked about being assigned to individual classes and how this helped to build up relationships with the class teacher and the class (Line 1090). In doing this a balanced view of children was able to be formed. I assume that without this the supervisors must usually focus on, as they call them, the, 'bad points'. Although they have a discussion about the relative merits of being assigned to a class they convey that they think it is important to develop relationships with children and this helps in managing their behaviour.

Needing to know children is stressed again when talking about supply teachers and how it would be pointless to discuss children with them because, '...there isn't an awful lot of point in talking to somebody who's on for a half a day

because they haven't got any background to the issues and you really want to be talking to somebody who knows', (Line 1255). Understanding and respecting individual children's backgrounds and differences is clearly important to the supervisors.

This is confirmed when they talk about the buddies. 'Yeah we got the kids together and listened to their opinion and went with them', (Line 1347). It seems there was a system before, but it had not been set up in consultation with the children so it did not work well. They are open to new ideas and thinking about why something did not work, and trying again. They aren't put off by problems. They also recognise that children are the playground experts and so their views should be sought. I discussed this in the background literature review and raised a concern about whether adults would worry about the redistribution of power in involving children in decision making. It seems that the supervisors do not overtly worry about power imbalances.

They do not think that training would be useful, partly because, 'It's all right reading about it. It's about personal relationships. And children. They're all different, very individual', (Line 1527). They obviously have some confidence in their own abilities to develop this knowledge about children and their relationship with them. They often refer to children as being very individual, which I did not expect but am heartened to read, particularly as there are so many children in their care at lunchtime.

At Lines 1698-1708 they talk about a miracle event. 'The children would just be what you would expect and want children to be'. They realise that some children won't listen and do as they are told. This is normal. They accept this aspect of



children's presentation. Is this about knowing children well? Does this include having expectations of non-conformity?

### **Team solidarity**

Immediately they begin by presenting themselves as a team. 'We', and 'us', are used a lot during the interview. There are so many I will not list them.

Line 6, 8, 11, etc. They use words, 'them' they're'. Is there a them / us divide?

Lines 46, 48, 57. 'We're'. '...that's where we can help'.

Line 166. The supervisors have a degree of confidence in their relationships such that they are able to disagree or question each other. They agree with each other too.

Line 572. They respect the differences between themselves, 'Not all of us are the same but that doesn't matter'. They know each other's strengths and support each other. They are able to ask for help. This comes across as a real strength of the team. They have had to develop a team identity because they lack power in the school.

Line 624-628. They think they are a, 'good team'. This simple statement reinforces the view that they are effective supervisors.

Line 767. 'It's us on our own'. 'We need to be there for each other', (Line 1535). They feel lonely and unsupported. A sense of loneliness comes again later when they describe how consistency helps them to do the job well. 'We try but sometimes we don't always manage it because it's a big school and sometimes we're a yard or so apart', (Line 1187). Physical space is an issue for management though they have said children need opportunities that space

creates (is there a tension between the belief about children's needs and the challenge of managing this?).

Line 781. 'So's we just get on with it and do our own things really'. They have to be a team because the teachers do not offer them guidance or involve them.

Differences in views are comfortably expressed, 'I think differently to you on that', (Line 999).

Even in the course of the interview they exchange ideas about being assigned to individual classes and one supervisor is comfortable to admit they have no relationship with the class they are with at that time. 'I've got no relationship with them. It's a year 5 class and they don't want to know. I'm friendly with the teacher. It's a good class though', (Line 1100). It is acknowledged that working with the infant classes can be easier so they decide to swap classes. This reflects support for each other and the mutual trust that they will not judge each other as being incompetent. Being assigned to individual classes is something they must feel they have control over. Do they seek these opportunities to assert themselves?

They certainly work at developing the sense of being a team. Line 1208, 'We get time for a chat before lunch as well and at the end'. 'We don't always talk about the children though. We have general chitchat. But that's important too...', (Line 1210). 'Talking can be good, to each other', (Line 1531). 'You get different ideas and you get to know that what drives you up the wall drives her up the wall too', (Line 1532). They know each other well and will support each other, sometimes with humour, 'So me being me I went and made her laugh and we went down together and sorted the problem out...', (Line 1627). They sorted the problem

together – it was not a case of handing it on. This suggests a collaborative approach.

They claim ownership of the buddies, 'We've got the buddies now on going again', (Line 1329).

They compare their team with how it used to be when they first started and communication was poor. 'They were the old school', (Line 1490). This suggests that they are the, 'new school' and the connotations of this are that they are more forward thinking and more effective. They also endeavour to be fair by sharing the roles and having a rota (Line 1495).

The supervisors think that teachers do not work as a team and do not have the confidence to admit when they find things difficult, 'It would be like saying they couldn't do their job', (Line 1643). Yet they can be open with each other (Line 1637).

They are comfortable admitting to things that bother them, 'I can't cope with kids who tell tales and ones that go on like that, about friends', (Line 1872). This takes real strength within the team and individual confidence to admit to a weakness.

### **Career Choice**

Lines 422-436. They are adamant that this was not a career of choice but it is convenient. Might there be some shame, or feeling disappointed in their choice of career? I'm not sure though because they do seem to enjoy it and enjoy being with the children. They also think that they have a valuable role. Unless of course they have tried to convince themselves of this to justify why the job is worth continuing with. I have to say though I think not. I think it probably was largely convenience but they do now truly value their role.

Line 507. They feel they have a choice to go somewhere else but is a this real choice if one of the reasons is about convenience? They may actually feel trapped in the job. This comes up again in Line 445, 'You get away after an hour'.

Lines 511-541. They believe that they can do the job and have confidence in their own skills but lack formal qualifications. This may impact on their self-esteem (and one was very proud talking about her NVQ) and also perpetuate this feeling that they do not really have a choice. The job is convenient. They can do it and do not have qualifications to make an alternative choice.

Line 526. A supervisor asks if anybody can go to college and wants reassurance. The supervisor aspires for more. Another doesn't, she wants something that is convenient and manageable (Line 535). It's good that she can be honest about this and suggests trust between them.

This concern about qualifications brings to mind some of the research that I read which stated that supervisors did not see themselves as, 'educationalists'. I think self-esteem is probably connected to an awareness of the lack of qualifications. The supervisors did actually describe a lot of their work as being about teaching and facilitating children's learning. I think they should consider themselves to be, 'educationalists'.

### **Gender and age expectations and differences**

Line 37. Quite early into the interview the issue of age comes up. They talk about the, 'older ones'. Line 833 they talk of facilitating different things for different ages, and again at Line 901. Line 878 they explain that they have banter with older ones, and try to get them to sort out their own little problems. Forming a

relationship with a Year 5 class is identified as a difficulty (Line 1100). Wet play is more of a concern for those supervising the juniors (Line 1588). I think they may have certain expectations of children of a certain age? Maybe this is what they actually observe older children to be doing. Perhaps the children are reading what the adults expect of them and are acting up to these expectations. I do not know. I wonder if this is tied in with the supervisors' views of wanting to be needed, and having a nurturing role. Perhaps they feel they cannot do this or do not do this as much with the older children as they do with the younger children.

Line 37. The supervisors perceive older children to be caring. Is this something about the power or the status of the older children over the younger children?

Line 45. Gender is raised as an issue. Do they have expectations of boys, for instance they use the phrase, 'even boys'.

Lines 125-127. They explicitly express a difference between the way that boys and girls play in suggesting that girls make up more games. Or play more. But also that the younger ones do this more too (I assume than older children).

Perhaps this is what they observe, or perhaps it's what they assume. Or could it be that girls are more inclined to share/show their games than boys?

Lines 158-166. The supervisors pick up this thought that I was having. They discuss whether or not boys feel able to, 'let themselves go' and suggest that it is expectations about the way that boys should play that inhibits their imaginative game playing. But, who communicates these expectations to the boys – could the supervisors be doing a bit of this themselves without realising.

Lines 128- 135. They like to be able to see how children change over time as they mature. They realise that children need to have some resilience to cope with

secondary school. Is there also something here about power and status? Year 6 children being big and having too much confidence? Are the supervisors lacking in confidence themselves in relation to the older/bigger children?

Consistent with other research into the views of supervisors the issue of football comes up in relation to its dominance for older boys (Line 300 and Line 1822).

The supervisors make a valid point that boys have always liked to kick a ball about. They link this to how children's play has not really changed over the years but it just feels different to them. How does it feel different I wonder – is it because now they are able to stand back, observe and reflect whereas when they were younger they were busy with their own activities? Might this suggest that although adults worry about the dominance of football this isn't something that the rest of the children worry about? I had not really thought about this before but it is possibly a good point.

Football dominating space is raised at Line 1834, 'They're competing against the footballers with that, who volley the ball against the wall'. Maybe it's not the game of football itself that is the problem but the way that the children play it and the expectations they have about being allowed to play in an aggressive and domineering way.

Do we, as adults, have this romantic view of what children's play at lunchtimes should be like based on our own cleaned-up rose tinted memories of our own childhood lunchtime experiences? Perhaps the sort of things that children do and their experience in playgrounds today is very similar to what we did also.

Alternatively do they simply play different types of games that adults do not recognise and which makes the adult feel left out and on unfamiliar ground. 'We showed them how to play two balls, me and J., with the girls, and they had no

idea how to', (Line 1817). Why should children be expected to be competent at the games that adults played when they were younger?

Lines 629-638. They mention the benefits of having a male supervisor. He is a positive role model for the children. They make assumptions about the other male role models in children's lives. Being a role model seems to be something that they think is an important part of their role though this was not a part of the background literature that I reviewed.

I see it comes up again at Line 848, '...they look up to you...'

When talking about how they supported a child whose mother had died and how miserable he was feeling the comment, 'He was only little', (Line 1680) is made. Does this imply that had he been bigger the child might have had different feelings, or they would have expected him or themselves to deal with the situation in a different way? Or are they portraying an image of this poor little child who they nurtured and how kind are they, how much bigger they are? They use the word, 'little' again at Line 1685, 'Her little face...'. Is there something a bit patronising about this, I do not know. I do not think it is meant this way but there is something about the children being little and helpless and the adults taking care of them.

When I think more about this I realise that the phrase, 'Bless them' is used a few times (Lines 849, 1686 and 1698). Poor little innocent children being blessed by the more powerful adult. Or is it simply a term of colloquial endearment?

The supervisors talk of the girls being more prone to friendship fall outs (Line 1867). Possibly this reflects that the girls seek adult intervention more or do the boys resolve such difficulties in a different way (or is this my own gender bias

assuming that boys sometimes solve problems in a physical way). They go on to say that the boys have a fight and move on from the problem, particularly as they get older (Line 1874).

In the literature review influences on children's play were identified and these included age and gender of children. The supervisors however seem more concerned with the age of a child.

### **Specific problems**

Line 55. Line 690. They talk about children who do not have friends or do not join in or who are quiet. This is the first problem they've identified and it's about individual children, not about significant behaviour challenges. It suggests that they are aware of children as individuals.

Line 249. Bullying during lunchtime is raised but as a side issue to the issue of teachers not understanding what happens at lunchtimes, rather than it being a significant problem in itself.

When talking about the behaviour of children the supervisors suggest that this is a concern restricted to a limited number of children, who they refer to as the, 'real problems', (Line 1008). They later say that, 'It's individuals that cause problems', (Line 1029) and talk about how this impacts on other children and how well they can do their job. Behaviour then doesn't seem to be a generic issue but the ramifications of it can be. A child can become a poor role model and others may imitate to see how far they can go. 'Sometimes if they see this child getting away with something they have a little go at it to see how far they can push the boundaries. So they do a little test', (Line 1041). However the supervisors suggest they are aware of this and ready to respond if need be. This is about



knowing the children and being skilled at observation and able to use sensitive management.

Fighting is mentioned and they say that they '...don't really get lots of fighting, like real fights, do we? It's maybes arguments and bickering, and such', (Line 1392). These sorts of behaviours are considered to be, 'minor', (Line 1395) and I am assuming that there is an expectation that children will argue between themselves. They describe how children do not think about the likely consequences of throwing stones and waving sticks about (Line 1397).

Line 1399. 'The play fighting's the worst though. They don't know when to stop and some of them don't know their own strength'. The supervisors are there to moderate play fighting because the children lack self-control (but then later they say we should trust children to take risks). The supervisors worry that it can go further. They seem to view this differently to teachers (so conflict here), 'Some of the teachers don't even mind it; they never stop it at playtime', (Line 1402). Some of the research reported in the literature review tackles this very topic and identifies that it is difficult to discriminate between real and play fights. In some of the literature it is argued that play fighting helps to maintain friendships and express emotions but the supervisors are struggling to see these benefits. They worry that children lack self control in such situations.

Children's lack of self-control comes up again at Line 1722, 'Yeah some of them get so fired up you've hardly got time to say, 'Now hang on'. 'No they're off on one'.

How do the supervisors know this? Are they making assumptions? Why is it that teachers do not mind it – is it because they do not worry it will go further? Being

able to discriminate between play fighting and real fighting was an area explored in the background literature.

Line 1565. 'I worry sometimes what I'd do if a child came and told me something really personal, sensitive like'. Given they talk about the relationship they have with children and how children talk with them, and test things out with them it is probably realistic of them to anticipate that a child may well disclose a safeguarding issue. They may even hint at less significant but emotionally upsetting circumstances that the supervisors have to respond sensitively to, and know when and how to share such information.

Line 1861, 'Social skills are important but for some being inside is like a refuge'. The supervisors are sensitive to the needs of individuals and are able to reflect on why children might choose to stay inside. They realise that by having to deal with the child inside, '...they get an interaction', (Line 1867), which is what the child wanted because they like to gain attention.

### **Play and fun**

Lines 59- 61. 'They should be having fun, a bit of a laugh', (Line 59)

Does this mean that it isn't? They say that they sometimes forget that lunchtimes should be about having fun. This is because they are busy sorting out everything else. Is this a conflict for them – do they feel obliged to regard the practicalities as a priority over the idea of children having a good time? Maybe this is understandable because children do have to get something to eat. I wonder though could the organisation of dining be done in a different way to give the children and the supervisors the space and time to think more about having fun? Time for thinking is raised as an issue later.

Line 68. 'Playing is like experimenting'

Line 69. The phrase, 'I wonder' is used.

Lines 71-72. 'See what happens, where it takes them'.

Line 80. 'I like to see when they make up their own games'.

Line 81. 'Some of them come up with great ideas'.

Line 103. '...their imagination is great isn't it?'

How wonderful are these phrases? The supervisors talk about some of the core characteristics from the definition of what play is. They understand what children's play is about. They must consider that lunchtime is an opportunity to play in this way. Is that what they meant when they said, 'to play as children', (Line 4)?

I assume that they observe children to engage in these sorts of behaviours which is so encouraging if we think about ensuring a child's right to have some time to play when at school. It is also a little inconsistent with the problem view of lunchtimes that was in some of the background literature. I think this is also about them having a unique position in being able to observe and enjoy the way that children play. Parents and teachers aren't there at lunchtimes so they miss out on this part of children's lives.

Lines 103-108. The child is in control of the play. The supervisors realise this, and value it.

Line 750. 'They can make a hole in the ground into something magical if they wanted to'. In talking about this I think that the supervisors are expressing an appreciation of the value of children's play and the magic of it. I think it's lovely.

But they are concerned about the lack of facilities for children to develop their play, 'and they come out, to what, I mean really what is there?', (Line 747).

The supervisors talk about allowing children a little lee way during wet lunchtimes, by letting them throw paper aeroplanes for instance, because they need some freedom. Is it that they need a physical release and a sense of fun? But, '...you have to draw the line but a little bit of boisterous behaviour, even in the classroom, is acceptable for a Year 6 or Year 5 class', (Line 1610). They are accepting that children need time to, 'fool around'. I'm not sure why it's okay for the older children but not the younger ones, or is it that they aren't boisterous? Or is it that they feel they can trust the older children to moderate such behaviours. Or, are they trying to make excuses for there being poor behaviour amongst older children during wet lunchtimes and not being able to manage it well.

The background research that I reviewed suggested that children wanted space and equipment. Similarly having a range of choices available to the children is valued by the supervisors. They would like more toys (Line 1782) a quiet area (Line 1785) and shade (Line 1799). 'They do need a net to throw a ball at. They've got a choice then, whether to play or not', (Line 1846). They say that facilities such as this need to be properly set up with the children, 'But a quiet area could even be plop in the middle of the playground if we set it up right', (Line 1806). I am assuming they mean this is about negotiating with the children about how that area would be used and trusting them to comply with such agreements. They appreciate the value of seating to encourage social chatting (Line 1809).

As with many things that I want to talk about in the diary I have a tussle with myself about where to put something and so I usually just make a quick decision and assign it to a category knowing that it may well change. However, it isn't always clear. The supervisors talk about playground markings, 'real games', and teaching children to play (Line 1816). In this short passage the supervisors make assumptions about gender and play, about children not knowing how to play, about what constitutes play and, 'real games', the seasonality of games and how part of their role is to facilitate children playing, if only they had the time. I could therefore assign this part of the story to a number of categories. Ultimately I've included it here and have references about gender and play for instance elsewhere.

The supervisors suggest that children are easily bored and that new games are a, 'fad', (Line 1831). Perhaps children are confident and comfortable with familiar games. I'm interested to read later that if a miracle happened the supervisors would like the children to, '...try different things, not just stick to the same things every day', (Line 1880). They want variety and choice for the children and this takes us back to the very core of what play is for children. But, if the children do have some choice and still, 'stick to the same things', then that should be fine, provided it really is a choice that they were free to make. If children chose not to throw a ball at a wall because of fear of being hurt by a football being kicked at a wall then that isn't fair. I cannot really explore this further though as I do not know why children are making the choices that they make in this particular playground.

## **Joy of children**

Lines 85-88. When talking about the way that children play the supervisors express pleasure. 'I like to see that'. 'I laugh sometimes'. There seems to be some joy in being able to observe or be a part of children's pleasure.

Line 106. 'It's lovely to see'.

Line 401. Wanting to capture a play sequence on video.

Line 431. 'I just love it'.

Line 433. 'Like working with children'. They refer to this again when talking about an effective supervisor, 'Well it helps to like children' (Line 579).

A good day is when they, '...have a bit of a laugh don't we? Things that kids have done or said', (Line 798). I did not anticipate this joy of children.

Line 1506. They talk of being silly and daft with children. They seem to enjoy this fun. I think it helps to establish positive relationships.

Line 1520. 'I love standing and watching a group just having a chat like'.

Line 1828. 'If the miracle happened it would be nice to have time to teach them some games and things'. The supervisors want to be involved in children's play.

## **Community and over protection**

Lines 63-67. Line 305. The supervisors think it is good for children to play as they do not get much chance to do this now because of changes in society and parents protecting children. Does this enhance the status of the supervisors (in their own eyes) as they are the adults that allow the children to play and have fun? Does this create a sense of responsibility, and is this onerous? I'll see if

they talk more of this later. This change in society and opportunities to play was an issue raised through the literature review.

Line 720. They do discuss it again, expressing concern that children cannot play in the bushes for fear they may get hurt. They also suggest parents should sign a disclaimer so that the supervisors cannot be blamed for accidents. They are wary of parents blaming them.

### **No time to reflect**

Line 73. 'When you think about it', implies that they do not usually have the time to think.

They are capable of reflecting on what happens at lunchtimes and their experiences of it but they do not have the time because of the practicalities. Is this another conflict for them? Are the practical tasks getting in the way of doing much else?

Line 171. Here a thought strikes the supervisors and they say they had not thought of this issue in this way before, 'It's funny when you think'.

They are able to reflect though and I think they do this more than they realise, '...there is days when I must admit I think, what are you doing here', (Line 1630).

This suggests to me some dissatisfaction with their role but they are able to resolve this by talking to each other and accept that, '...we don't get many days like that', (Line 1639).

Line 263. When talking about parents' views they say, 'I've never given that much thought'.

Line 482. When talking about the variety and challenge in their role they say, '...but there is more to it when you think about it' and, '...don't even think too much about it'. They accept the role and get on with it. There seems to be a lot of acceptance and just getting on with it. They present as grounded individuals who see a job needs doing and so do it.

Line 681. 'A good supervisor can sort of stand back and weigh everything up'. They talk about having lots to do but still need to have a handle on what's going on everywhere. They cannot, '...rush in like headless chickens', (Line 688). 'You've got to think all the time', (Line 689). If they feel under pressure to do all of these things to the extent that they do not have time to think does this make them feel, sometimes at least, as though they haven't been an effective supervisor? Would this impact on their esteem, or achievement and satisfaction?

This is re-visited later at Line 1517. At first they thought they had to always look busy but have learned, 'It's okay to sometimes just stand and keep an eye out'.

### **Very busy**

Lines 179-197. When asked about what their job involves the immediate reaction is, 'Oh where do we start?' This gives a strong verbal message that the list is very long. It communicates to the researcher that the supervisors have a lot to do and they have a very demanding job. Certainly that is how they perceive it. The practical tasks present a significant challenge. This is very much a shared challenge though (going back to the team solidarity). It also takes me back to the notion of responsibility. They have to help the children. This may also relate to power. They have the power to help children or instruct them and without the supervisors the children would be lost. The supervisor is an essential player in



children's lunchtime experiences. Feeling this may well have a positive impact on the esteem of the supervisors.

Line 192. The supervisor feels that she has to be prepared (with tissues). Why? What would be the problem if there was not a tissue immediately to hand? Do the supervisors feel that with so much to do being prepared reduces the pressure? Does being prepared give a sense of control (and do they perceive a lack of this in some way?). Does being prepared communicate a message to the children about how supervisors can anticipate their needs and therefore they are more powerful than the children? Of course it could simply be the supervisors wanting to demonstrate to me how well they understand their role and how good they are at it because they are so well prepared.

Line 193. Lines 196-197. The supervisors feel they are indispensable. They sort out all little and big problems and unpleasant ones too. They feel obliged to. Is this linked to being prepared?

Line 561. They talk of the many jobs they have to do, the pressure and how it's, '...go, go, go. It's a military exercise'. It sounds as though they are the sergeant majors in charge of barking orders. They must have a sense of lunchtime needing to be well organised and governed by routine and commands being followed without question. Are they the powerful ones and the children their junior foot soldiers?

They are proud of how they have got this, '...sussed', (Line 563) and the children know what to do (this links in with the shared culture also). Are they pleased that the children comply with their routines?

Line 755. 'It's good when we've got time to talk and praise the children'. This is saying they often do not have the time. They recognise though this helps in building relationships with children.

Needing help because they have so much to do is linked in with a discussion about children receiving a special mention in assembly when they assisted in the absence of one of the supervisors. This also communicates to the children that being helpful is valued.

This is extended to the role of the buddies, who are there to help because the supervisors may be busy doing something else (Line 1335) and they can earn a certificate, '...to say they have helped more...', (Line 1355). Earlier I had discussed how being helpful is an attribute valued by the supervisors and I think this is further reinforced by the buddy system. Is this tied up with their own identities as people who are helpful and busy? By rewarding children who are helpful are they by association rewarding themselves?

The supervisors want everybody to know what it is they do, how busy they are and how challenging their role is. They are very proud that the Head of Governors recognised this, 'You have, you've got the hardest job', (Line 1431). Are they being a little selfish in wanting this, because I am sure there are others in school that also have a busy and challenging time in school. I wonder if they know what the school caretaker does, or the cook, or a teaching assistant, or even a class teacher?

Line 1895. 'It's surprising isn't it, when you get started there's so much to say. I didn't realise just how much we did'. They haven't had time or opportunity to think about this before. Do they feel that they are taken for granted? 'We should maybe ask for a pay rise', (Line 1898). This is said as a joke but I wonder if

underlying this there is a real point to be made, when you consider all that they do, the number of children they have in their care, and the short time they have to do everything.

### **Assumptions**

Line 75. 'Some of them even...'. The word, 'even' suggests unexpectedness. Do the supervisors make assumptions about how children will play? In fact going back to Line 45 they say, '...even the boys...'.

Lines 153-157. The supervisors feel that they can predict how some children will, '...turn out...'. They relate this to their families and express shame that some children, '...don't stand a chance'. They are using their personal knowledge of children's families to make assumptions about their likely future. Could this in fact be a self-fulfilling prophecy? Does it make a difference to the relationships that they personally have with those individual children?

Alongside appreciating that children can be creative and imaginative in their play the supervisors make comments about children not knowing how to play (Line 752) and difficulties with sharing and arguments. I'm not sure what they mean by this assertion that children do not know how to play. Is this confusion between playing and social interaction skills? It is usual for children to have arguments and difficulties in sharing and this is a normal part of their social maturity. It doesn't necessarily mean that children do not know how to play. I'm interested that this comes up again at Line 907, when it is suggested that they do not play like they used to, and do not know how to. The supervisors have raised this twice now so I am assuming that it is something they are concerned about. However, they go on to say that when they get a game going the children '...love it', (Line 912) so children must enjoy playing and enjoy the supervisors initiating and

getting involved in games with them. This I am assuming is about sharing an experience together.

I am also confused because they talk about children using their imagination and wouldn't this imply that children do know how to play?

Assumptions are made about children's likely behaviour based on the supervisors past experiences with them, '... you get to know the children, which ones are likely to create so they're the ones you know to keep an eye on', (Line 1366). Are they right in this? Part of me is a little uncomfortable to admit that as adults I think we do make such assumptions, and often we are proven right, but I do not know if this is because children live up to the expectations we have of them.

Similarly at Line 1711 they say, 'I think 60 or 70% of the kids are perfectly normal human beings and they do things you would expect them to do'. Does this mean that 30-40% of the children in their care are imperfect, abnormal and inhuman and do unexpected things? This is a terribly damning description of a large number of children. Do they communicate this to those children I wonder? Are they generalising about the children? Perhaps these numbers of children do challenge the adults and the school system through their behaviour but does this really mean that they are not, 'normal'. What in any case does 'normal' mean to the supervisors? Is this about doing as you are told and conforming?

They clarify this by following up with the statement that they do not want children to be identical and perfect and clones (Line 1718). 'No, just amenable to a bit of suggestion and to think for themselves', (Line 1720). I'm not sure if what they really mean here is not suggestion but direction from them.

### **Children do not appreciate or use facilities**

Line 79. They state that children do not make use of the facilities. I wonder if the supervisors are disappointed in children's lack of appreciation of the available resources. Do they feel that children should be grateful? But then they do go on to talk about liking to see children make up their own games.

### **Nature of play**

Lines 82-83. Line 110. Line 295. The supervisors feel that children's play today is just the same as it was when they were younger. They seem a little disappointed in the lack of progress in play.

Lines 111-122. They worry that children want to be entertained. But they also recognise that there are times when children will play more imaginatively. I wonder if there is a belief or a folklore that is around in society that children do not play as they used to and that they now rely on electronic games. The reality might not be as bad as is assumed. Perhaps children do play more than we give them credit for. Are the supervisors picking up on this societal worry and repeating it whilst at the same time being aware that children do play. It's a conflict between being persuaded of one thing whilst experiencing something else

### **Supervisors' culture / children's culture / shared culture**

Line 90. 'Sometimes I have to hide a smile'. The supervisors have a private or personal experience of lunchtimes, which they hide (and I wonder why they hide it?) from the children. In the background literature there were references to supervisors having a unique experience and knowledge of children at lunchtime.

Line 92. Lines 325-326. When talking about the things that children say they observe that parents would, 'go mad', if they knew what they said. 'If only they could see what some of their treasures get up to sometimes, it'd turn their hair blue'. This implies that the supervisors have insider knowledge of children's worlds that parents do not have. But more than this it implies a shared nature, because it's a sort of secret – the supervisors wouldn't tell the parents what the children say or do. Do the children realise this, which is why they feel, 'safe', to say some of the things that they do? Might the supervisors be considered to be colluding with children?

Lines 94-102. They describe how children might invite the supervisors to join in their play to share their play experiences with them. They also talk of how the children understand their own made up rules even though the adults do not. This is about the children's culture too in which they have their own games and ways of playing them.

Lines 139-152. The children's social hierarchy is discussed and in particular the way in which this is shaped, which seems to happen without obvious decision making. This is also about children's culture. The supervisors do not understand it. They think they can not influence children's social hierarchy and I wondered if they might be worried about their lack of understanding and power. I do not think so however as they suggest they are invited into the children's world sometimes. Furthermore the supervisors and children have some shared understandings about lunchtimes.

Lines 171-177. The supervisors realise that the children make up the sorts of games that adults wouldn't tell them to play.

Line 368. Suggests that children get to know or can read the supervisors and the situation. 'Sometimes y'know they're so clever at knowing just how far to go, and then they pull back'. They explore this a little more in Lines 373-382. This seems to be known by the supervisors and it's okay, it's acceptable. The children and the supervisors have a shared understanding of what is going on here. It's not spoken about explicitly though. Thinking again about power, perhaps the supervisors are giving the children permission to go so far and then pull back. Though they also seem to realise that pushing boundaries is part of learning (Line 366) and it's a preparation for the future.

Line 1124. 'I think they know how to wind us up, working us. They get to know, the ones you'd have a problem with. Which buttons to press'. Equally, 'The children can tell you which teacher will let them get away with something so they go and ask them. They're not daft', (Line 1197). 'Yeah if you feel like they've got on top of you it's catch 22 because they think they've got on top they seem to keep going and they know they've got to you', (Line 1633). The supervisors realise that children have an understanding about adults and that they will exploit this knowledge to their advantage. The supervisors need to have a sense of control, and be confident that the children sense this too. However, amongst the children there is a moderating factor such that other children sometimes intervene and, '...don't really let them away with it anyway', (Line 1205). I'm not sure what it is that makes another child intervene in this way. I think I would need to have more contextual details.

Again at Line 1523. 'I'm more confident with the children now and they can sense that so I don't get any nonsense'.

Lines 387-393. The supervisors describe how children attempt to draw the supervisors into their childhood culture. This makes the supervisors feel good; and makes the job feel worthwhile. This is again about the joy of being with the children at lunchtime. It is also I think about the supervisors wanting to feel needed and appreciated. Maybe the supervisors need to feel this because their own esteem is low, or their perception of their status in school is low.

Line 548. They talk of the freedom of the playground, '...every man for himself and everything goes'. The playground culture is different and more challenging for them than the classroom culture. On the playground there is uncertainty about the rules.

They believe that supervisors need to understand the barriers between them and the children. They are critical of a supervisor who was, '...like one of the children' (Line 584). This also says that the supervisors understand about boundaries. They also talk of it as though they need to be role models for the children. They must therefore consider themselves to be positive role models and prepared to stand up to somebody who isn't. They have standards of conduct.

Role model comes up again later (Line 915) and also how the children test things out with them. There must be some trust between them. There must be some unspoken code where the children are prepared to discuss potentially awkward issues with them and they feel confident that the supervisors will offer guidance, but also will not get them into trouble. It's a unique position the supervisors are in. It's a shared experience. I wonder if role model should be a separate theme.

When they talk of their relationships with children they suggest a shared understanding of their role. 'They know you're not a teacher as such and they can talk to you. And you'll listen to them', (Line 650).



There is spontaneity to the shared experiences with children (Line 804) when they play with the children, or perhaps plan a treat for them. Some of the shared play is at the direction of the children however (such as turning a skipping rope for them).

Line 821. 'Keeping an eye on them, generally but not too much'. I really think that the supervisors respect children's independence at lunchtimes. They realise that they need to supervise them but they feel they should moderate this, to give children space to play in an unpredictable, innovative and creative way.

The shared understanding is raised again at Line 995. They suggest that both children and supervisors know that they have to go through a charade of the child apologising even though they both know it's not sincere and doesn't make a difference. Is this about assumptions too? Assuming that children should feel genuinely sorry and want to apologise? I think it lacks a little understanding about how an individual might feel about being asked to apologise by somebody older and in a position of authority. Sorrow and remorse is quite a deep core feeling that cannot be suggested or donated to individuals. But then there are social niceties that we learn as we mature so we do sometimes apologise when we do not really mean it – but I do not think the children will have learned this yet. The supervisor feels, 'cross', about children's apparent lack of remorse. Is the feeling related to feeling cross and frustrated about other issues? They had just been talking about teachers' giving conflicting messages so perhaps this point about children apologising is more about wanting to be left to decide what the best course of action is rather than act out an expected charade? Could it also be a way of confirming the shared understanding between supervisors and children?

Related to this shared understanding is that children know nothing is going to happen to them if they become a, 'real problem', (Lines 1009 and 1021).

A further example is given about the shared understanding between children and supervisors at Line 1165. The supervisor described how they take a piece of paper and pen out of a pocket as though to write a child's name down. This is signal enough for the child to stop whatever it was they were doing. It's, 'kidology', (Line 1171). But, within this they recognise that a skill of a supervisor is to keep to your word, and for the children to know you will, 'If I get that paper out they have to know I will do it', (Line 1176).

They draw out a rather nice consequence of the pitfalls of adults being drawn into the child's world, 'It comes down to they are children. The adults fall out and the children are friends in 5 minutes', (Line 1452). It's a cautionary tale which I think is quite accurate.

### **Children's self-esteem**

This might be about shared understanding of lunchtimes, or the relationship between children and supervisors, I'm not sure. They talk about when there is a fight (and I think they do not necessarily mean violent fists and feet but disagreements) when children need to, '...see things through', (Line 1387). I am assuming they mean there needs to be closure of some sort. In addition the children need to feel that they have had opportunity to verbally express their version of events, 'It is important to kids to have their say, to say what they want to say', (Line 1389). The supervisors are being sensitive to children's need to be heard.

## **Nurture**

Lines 199-200. Talking to children, listening to them, comforting and reassuring – this sort of nurturing is raised as something that the job involves.

Line 813. A good lunchtime is when they have time to listen and chat with the children. I recall from observing at lunchtimes that there is a lot of chatting and smiling with children.

They explicitly draw a distinction between the practical aspects of their role and, ‘...nurturing them...’, (Line 840.). This is a caring side to the supervisors which they are keen to retain, despite having a lot of organisational matters to get through. They confirm that it’s not just about telling children off, it’s about parenting too (Line 844). Possibly this is a way to gain some power over children but I do not think so. They say, ‘...they’re just individual people but they are somebody’s children and that’s all they are, children...’, (Line 846). This is very respectful of children.

Line 1281. ‘Emotional things, watch out for so and so, their pet rabbit died today’.

The supervisors are aware of the need to be sensitive about offering emotional support, ‘You don’t make a fuss. Unless they want you’, (Line 1284). ‘You’re on standby really if they want you, you’re there and if they don’t, you don’t’ (Line 1286). The child and the supervisor come to a shared understanding about what is needed. If they are able to ascertain what support a child needs, and when, this is very observant and intuitive of them.

Lines 1667-1680. A supervisor shares an anecdote about being there for a child whose mother had died, ‘I said I know it’s terrible but we can’t do anything about

it but come for a hug anytime you want. And he did. For a while it was nice to know that you were there’.

The supervisors think that being there for children is valuable, if a family member is ill or a pet has died, ‘Yeah but it’s important to that child isn’t it? It was a really horrible day for her. Her little face, she loved her fish. Bless her’, (Line 1684).

They do not trivialise a child’s upset but appreciate the impact it has on the individual and are prepared to nurture the child. They take a whole child perspective.

### **Practicalities and Organisation**

Lines 178-228. Line 1280. The supervisors talk about the practical tasks that they have to undertake to ‘...keep everything ship shape’, (Line 206) and the need to do this, ‘...smoothly...’, (Line 207). But who had told them this or are they assuming? Do they feel the need to present a well organised lunchtime to demonstrate how good they are at their role?

### **Teachers**

Line 209. The supervisors assume that the teachers want problem free lunchtimes. They perceive that teachers, ‘...huff and puff...’, (Line 213) if their support is asked for. Perhaps a teacher does, but is that directed at the children rather than the supervisors? This does come up in the literature review where teachers said something about only being aware of lunchtimes when there is a problem.

Line 213. ‘They need to support us to do our job’. The supervisors clearly feel that they do not receive support from teachers, and feel that this is needed.

However, they retract a little by saying they get paid for it (an issue that is raised again at Line 499). Do they think that because they are being paid they do not

have a right to expect some support? They seem a bit put upon though, 'We're the mugs who have to ...', (Line 216). They feel unappreciated. They return to this idea in Lines 489-498.

Line 223. They do not think that the teachers think about what the job of a supervisor is. What message might this convey? That it's not important? Not valued? That they as people are not valued? If the supervisors have low self-esteem (and I'm not saying that they do) wouldn't this lack of thought exacerbate this?

Is this about the limited powers of the supervisors? Limited rights?

Line 231. 'Like us...', suggests that there is a shared understanding between supervisors and teachers as to the purpose of lunchtimes. The opportunity to run around is an idea they share.

Lines 233-250. However the supervisors are not convinced that the lunchtime is of significance to the teachers. Given this is their career and they value the importance it (they?) has for children's development I wonder if the supervisors feel disappointed and frustrated with the teachers. Does this impact on how they in turn perceive the teachers – perhaps as being blinkered, selfish and too busy to take everything on board. Or could an alternative view be that the teachers trust the supervisors to get on with it? This doesn't seem to be how the supervisors talk about it though. The supervisors and teachers may not have had an opportunity to have a conversation about such issues. Do the supervisors feel that they have a voice in the school? Who would listen to them? Line 227. They say that they think the teachers leave it to the Head – so they must feel that the teachers will not listen to them.

Line 553. 'I don't think the teachers have any idea what it's really like for us out there'. Is this the them / us divide? There is also a sense that the playground is akin to a battlefield ('out there').

As with the children and playing what they, 'should play', as opposed to, 'what can I play today', (discussed in the literature review) it is possible that the supervisors are so unclear about what their role is and what others expect of them that they are concerned with trying to be what they think the teachers and parents think they, 'should be'.

Line 567. Strong suggestion of conflict and disagreement with teachers, 'I couldn't keep my mouth shut'. The supervisors know better. Line 761, '...if the teacher listened and said the right things it looked better'. They say one of the teachers will not let the children have the netballs, 'She didn't want them to unless she was supervising, but she never does', (Line 1843).

They want to communicate to the children that the teachers and supervisors are working together, 'It looked to the children like we were working together and sometimes it did make a difference', (Line 762). They go on to discuss how little opportunity they have for this and that really, '...it's us on our own'. (Line 767).

Line 985. When asked if they have any concerns the initial response is, 'No, not really', which implies that underneath there is something. The supervisors elaborate to share their frustrations about teachers and confusion over who is in charge. Being in charge seems to be an issue with them. They want to know who is in charge and I think ideally they would like it to be them. Later this comes up again, '...and I feel like I can't control', (Line 1633). Again they discuss the issue of confusion as to who is in charge at Line 1751, 'It confuses things him being out there', and Line 1754, 'But it's hard to know who's in charge when he's there.

Is it him, as a teacher, or us?' They feel that the teachers might interfere, 'He's behaving like a teacher and getting involved in issues that he shouldn't get involved in', (Line 1759). There is a sense of the supervisors owning the lunchtime and wanting to be in charge of it. They do not seem to welcome teachers being outside with them, 'Sometimes I feel like, there is one person who comes out, and I feel like she's watching us', (Line 1766). Why are they defensive? Is it fear of a teacher interfering and trying to take control? Is it a concern that they might be criticised? I feel that it's a bit of both because they are worried about their status and ownership of the lunchtime and they worry about being blamed when things go wrong.

Line 995. I've previously discussed the issue about children apologising and wonder if this is about frustration with teachers and what they expect of the supervisors.

The relationship between the supervisors and teachers is an issue about which the supervisors contradict themselves. At Line 1150 they talk of the teachers, 'They are very open and approachable', having earlier said they, 'huff and puff', if they take problems to them and do not think about the role of a supervisor. At Line 1152 they declare, 'They ask for our advice', and then at Line 1155 say, 'They don't ask for our advice but they do approach us in different situations'. The situations that they described are about the teachers asking the supervisors to be vigilant as a problem with an individual is anticipated.

Line 1161. 'They do work with us though. We blow the whistle but the teachers are more authoritarian, they have the authority, more than we do, to get the kids, especially the older ones'. There is such a lot that the supervisors have said in this short passage. Firstly that the supervisors view of working together with

teachers is the supervisor taking on the rather menial task of blowing a whistle. Secondly that somehow the teachers have more authority vested in them than the supervisors. Who has vested this authority in them? Finally, that amongst the children there are age differences with the older ones needing the authority of the teachers, or so they assume.

Later, at Line 1297 they confirm that there has been limited involvement in behaviour management strategies. When different options were discussed it was difficult to carry out the same strategy at lunchtime as that in the classroom. The lunchtime is a unique context where there are fewer staff, more children and more space. I think also, though it was not mentioned, the children may have different expectations of what is possible at lunchtime. Maybe the adults too.

They offer an insightful response to a query about training needs. They say that they need something with teachers, time to talk to sort out what the teachers expect of them and what they expect of the teachers too (Line 1553). This is about working collaboratively, being clear about expectations and communication. The background literature suggested that a positive school ethos depends on shared values as well as clear procedures.

### **Communication**

I've started a new heading here because communication is, '...one of the biggest bug bears...', (Line 768). This goes a little deeper as the supervisors feel that they are not part of the staff and their advice is not sought. Though they later seem to contradict this, 'I think the teachers don't treat us any different. We are like part of the school', (Line 1144). This however is in relation to reprimanding children for the way that they speak to supervisors and being invited to social events. They say, 'We feel part of it', (Line 1150) yet earlier had admitted that



they did not feel comfortable going into the staff room for a drink. Not sure what this is about. Do they want to feel a part of the school? Is being uncomfortable about the staffroom to do with entering the teachers' space, which is their domain? There are lots of other comments about how they perceive a lack of support from teachers and frustration that teachers do not know what they do or seek their advice. I cannot help but think this remark (about being a part of the school) is about wishing to be a part of it but that day by day the reality is they do not feel a valued member of the whole school system.

Line 1047. 'When you report things on. We don't get to hear what's happened. Not all the time'. They expect better communication.

Line 1051. Communication about difficulties has been attempted through a book which they assume (but do not know) the Head reads and monitors. There is nothing to suggest that the communication is two-way.

Line 1061. The school Level system is discussed, which some seem to think may have been stopped. They actually say, 'Sounds like communication is a problem, just like we said before', (Line 1067). Again at Line 1074 they say it's interesting that they do not know what's happening. They explicitly identify communication as a barrier to doing their job. They say they could do their job more effectively if communication was improved (Line 1131). The way that they talk about it sounds as though they feel it is others, and not them, who are responsible for the communication problem. They even acknowledge that they moan about it often enough (Line 1078) so I have to wonder why they haven't addressed this, or have they? If they haven't is it about feeling that they do not have the responsibility for this? Do they feel that they do not have a right to question the communication? Is it convenient for them to sit back and attribute poor

communication to the difficulties and barriers that they face in doing their job well?

They describe various situations when they are not informed as to which member of the teaching staff is on lunchtime duty (Lines 1133-1140). 'It was actually Mrs L. on Friday, which we found out at going home time', (Line 1138). 'Often we're in a bit of a fog about things. Who do we refer to? Who's in charge? It's about communication isn't it?' (Line 1247). '...nobody has told you that they are going to a pantomime or certain things like that...', (Line 1267). I cannot see how the supervisors should take responsibility for this sort of communication difficulty. I can only assume that their angst about poor communication has some foundation.

Later they explain that they were to have regular meetings with the Head, '...but that's never came off', (Line 1214) and a defence of the Head is offered, that she is busy. Again I have to wonder why the supervisors feel that they do not have a right to support and collaborative working practices. They are almost apologetic for bringing it up as an issue. Between themselves they seem to toss around the issues surrounding communication and their working relationship with the Head and teachers. One moment they try to present a positive impression and be understanding of the pressures on the teaching staff, the next they are disappointed and angry about the lack of support. I suppose it is a tension for them that they are trying to resolve between themselves. They do not want to think that teaching staff haven't got the time for them, because what would that say about them, their role and lunchtimes in school (which the supervisors appear to value). To come to terms with this they present plausible excuses. Alternatively they could genuinely appreciate how challenging things are for teachers. For example they talk about the PPA time (Line 1226) and how

teachers need to do their planning (Line 1236). The supervisors want to support the teachers and want to manage the lunch period without having to call upon the teachers' time, though this is difficult for them. I certainly sense a challenging tension for the supervisors over this issue.

Difficulty in sustaining meetings with the Head comes up again at Line 1560. They say they should, 'Maybe take the stand on that, get something going again', (Line 1562). Between them they seem to be saying they could be more assertive and take responsibility for improving communication and collaborative working. What's holding them back though? The next statement they make explains this, 'Yeah but I wonder what's the point', (Line 1564). They have tried it before and nothing changes. They feel disappointed, dispirited. When I think of, 'Take the stand' I imagine somebody immovable, resolute, determined. Maybe they are saying they haven't been like that before and should try it now.

Poor communication was one of the, 'lacks', identified in the background literature and my experience of working with supervisors had also identified this as a problem. Despite this I was not prepared for the depth of feeling about the poor communication and the powerful impact this has on the supervisors.

### **Responsibility and Blame**

Line 252. They say they cannot be everywhere all of the time to counter bullying. This suggests it would be unreasonable to expect this of them but does it also imply a sense of blame or responsibility?

Line 257. They think that parents think they should stop bullying occurring and they feel this is unfair. From where have they got the idea that they are blamed?

Do parents come into school to complain about it or do they adopt this blame for themselves?

Lines 265-267. They soon get to hear from parents when there's a problem. 'Like the teachers really'. This implies that teachers soon complain to the supervisors if there is a problem.

Lines 493-495. They clearly feel responsible for troubling teachers if there is a problem at lunchtime. 'I think sometimes they must think we're just a nuisance because we bring problems to them'. This may restrict the supervisors in seeking support for fear of being seen to be a nuisance. Possibly of course the supervisors take issues to teachers which they might reasonably have been expected to have resolved themselves. Why would the supervisors take such problems to teachers – is it because they feel it's not their job to sort out problems, is it because they lack the confidence, is it because they do not feel they have the status or power to resolve a problem?

I'm putting this here but I'm not sure – it's about responsibility. Line 1007 they say that if they have a problem they can, '...take it along'. At Line 1047, they say, 'When you report things on'. Are they meaning to pass on responsibility – it's not said that they seek advice, or solve a problem together it is, 'take it', somewhere else. They refer, 'up', is this to a higher power? Do they consider themselves at a lower level in a school hierarchy? They seem to think that ultimately others in school are responsible. They are frustrated with this though because nothing seems to change. They think that nothing happens. This is about communication again. What are they expecting might happen though? Do they think that the Head has some special power or is better skilled or has some resources that

would solve the problem? Have they attributed greater powers to the Head than might be reasonable? Have they placed the Head on a pedestal?

The blame or responsibility is also placed within a wider context of the education system and funding arrangements. They aren't blinkered and do understand that the school and the Head are limited in what they can do. I'm still unsure as to what they think would make a difference though.

Actually when I think more about it they do tend to link responsibility with blame. If somebody is responsible for something and can be deemed to be wanting in some respect they tend to apportion blame. I cannot help but think that this has been their experience, or perceived experience. For instance if a child has been hurt at lunchtime, or a queue of children is noisy, or lunch was a little slow, is something communicated to (or interpreted by) the supervisors that they were to blame or weren't doing their job properly? An alternative view on this is that in the absence of clear guidance as to the requirements of their role they adopt a sense of responsibility for certain roles and if there is a problem they assume blame themselves. Maybe then they feel frustrated because if somebody had guided them better then the problem wouldn't have arisen in the first place.

### **Parents**

Supervisors think that parents are quick to blame them for problems.

Lines 268-272. Lines 286- 289. Supervisors think that parents have a romantic view of what they want lunchtimes to be about, linked to their own memories.

They do not realise that play and learning are related. Does this make supervisors feel they understand children and lunchtimes better than the parents do? Does this make them feel superior in some way? Alternatively do they feel

disappointed in parents' lack of understanding and unappreciated for the contribution their (supervisors) time makes to their children's development?

The supervisors are cautious about repeating information about children to parents because, 'We could start World War 3', (Line 1450). This implies that they have information which they are withholding from parents. They are deciding to be in control of the situation. They are being sensitive to the possible consequences of saying anything. I feel that the supervisors have a sense of being very much a part of the child's lunchtime world, and they want to keep it a world closed to parents, and to teachers. Certainly the background literature introduces the idea that there is a children's lunchtime culture but I do not think it draws out how the supervisors are a part of an unspoken (and probably unconscious) conspiracy to protect it from others.

I'm not sure where to place this next part, it's about feeling that parents do not understand, appreciate or support the role of the supervisor. '...it's hard going against the dad', (Line 1728). 'We're up against the parents sometimes as well', (Line 1733) which suggests a battle between parents and supervisors. A battle for control and influence. Do the supervisors perceive themselves to be the good role model, the facilitator, the one who educates and nurtures? Are they protective of this role in a child's life and jealous of anybody interfering with this? Could this be tied in with their own insecurities about their role, and their feeling of lack of status and power?

Are the supervisors making assumptions about what the parents say to their children about supervisors or problems at lunchtimes?

I do wonder if there is a dual message in what the supervisors say about parents. The supervisors feel or believe that they give the, 'right' messages to

children at lunchtimes (which may be undermined by parents) and they have a desire to be recognised and appreciated for the role that they have. They want parents to support them and value the role they have as supervisors.

When asked if the miracle happened how things with parents would be different, the supervisors replied, 'They'd leave us to get on with our jobs', (Line 1743).

They do not want parental interference.

### **Safety and Risk**

Line 321. The supervisors think that parents want them to keep their children safe. This transfers a sense of responsibility for the welfare to children to supervisors. The supervisors do not question this so I assume they accept this responsibility. Research into the views of parents had a focus on safety and problems at lunchtimes which I had assumed were an artefact of the research but I may well have been wrong. Perhaps when thinking about lunchtimes at school parents are primarily concerned about safety and inclusion.

Line 327. They are confused about some of the safety measures.

Line 331. Over-protection of children is a concern. The supervisors think that children learn from taking risks and suggest that the risks they would be likely to take at lunchtime would be minimal.

Lines 341 -351. They talk of trusting children to make the right choices and to use their common sense. Line 1844, 'They were perfectly responsible though'. This goes back to knowing children really. They have faith in children and trust that they will use their common sense. They have this knowledge about children that we do not have and suggest that we should give children more credit than we do. I do not know if they are right. Do we as adults retain this power to protect

children and offer guidance on choices to keep them safe because it makes us feel more powerful and more in control? Or do children need guidance about keeping themselves safe? They suggest that between themselves children moderate each other's behaviour. This must be something they have observed otherwise why make such a statement. Possibly this is linked to the children creating their own culture separately to the adults culture. They rightly point out that they (or other adults) will not always be there to protect and guide children and their argument is about preparation for the future (which is in the background literature). Are they right – do we over-protect (paranoid parenting) and should we have more faith in children's common sense? But, what if things go wrong? Would the supervisors be blamed for this? Given their comments about being blamed, perhaps they have so much confidence in the children this isn't a real worry for them.

### **Their status**

Line 354. 'You'd think it was to be a servant the way we have to clean up after them'. The supervisors feel exploited by the children. But who makes them clean up after the children?

Line 356. Then they go on to explain that although they are different to teachers, the children realise that they are in charge and do as they ask. The children are compliant with them, as they are generally with adults, though there is a sense of resignation that they do this sometimes, '...in their own way' and that the children are, 'Pushing boundaries...', (Line 365), '...and us', (Line 367). I think this also says something about them knowing children and understanding what they are doing.



Line 403. This is almost a fear of being caught out by a teacher, 'Now, watch, don't let Mrs B. hear you say that'.

Lines 500-506. They say that the teachers do not need to see their miserable faces each day so they paint on a smile. Again, why the need to please teachers? In Line 1146 they say, 'They do respect us, the teachers'. This sounds almost as though they are trying to convince themselves.

Line 1147, 'The teachers think it's good cos they know us and chat to us'. I think this suggests they are grateful to the teachers chatting to them, as though they wouldn't ordinarily expect such treatment. I really am beginning to think that the supervisors feel they are not as, 'good', as the teachers. I cannot explain what I mean by, 'good', perhaps more worthy of status and respect.

They perceive a lack of respect from parents too, 'I don't think they respect us like they would with a teacher', (Line 1419). They associate this with parents not appreciating what it is they do.

Lack of respect was something that I had anticipated the supervisors might talk about. This, and their self-esteem, are issues raised in the background literature too.

Lines 404-421. Suggests that they did not choose the role but they were needed by the school. They were all the same (reinforcing the group identity).

Lines 783-790. When talking about communication and conflict with teachers they feel that involvement should come from the teachers and the Head. They seem angry and frustrated about this issue. They feel that it is fruitless to try to improve joint working with the teachers. They are powerless to change this situation.

When talking about children who are, 'real problems', (Line 1009) they are quick to confirm they are a problem for teachers too – so it's not just them that cannot cope. They seem defensive.

Line 1050. The senior mentions that she sometimes gets to hear what has happened if something is reported on. This brings to mind something that I recall reading earlier where the senior says, 'I got them all in', (Line 413) when talking about why they applied for the job. If the supervisors perceive limited status within the school is it possible that within the team they search for an opportunity to gain some status, i.e. being senior. The senior certainly seems quite proud and perhaps has a sense of ownership of, 'her team'. However, when talking with the group I did not detect an overt hierarchy. The senior was sometimes more vocal but this was due to her personality I think rather than feeling her voice was more interesting or powerful than others. Maybe the title of, 'senior', has more value when talking to others outside of the team, such as the researcher, teachers, Head and Governors. The senior status comes up again at Line 1108, 'I'll swap us around again so we get to know more of the children'. The senior doesn't ask if this is something they'd like to happen but they go on to debate the benefits of this saying that they do not think the children or teachers like it and whether or not it makes a difference. The debate continues and at no point does it seem as though there is a status issue between them. They are confident in questioning the senior's suggestion.

Interestingly when talking about buddies the senior claims ownership of them, '...I've got five teams...', (Line 1345) and, 'I've done a reward system...', (Line 1349). Perhaps there is something underlying such comments. Maybe there is a slight hint on wanting to have some power and ownership.

They seem to want children to listen and want to have that sense of control, 'No, I'd like children to listen to you', (Line 1704). Does this suggest they feel that there is nothing they can do if children chose not to listen and that children are consciously making that choice to ignore the adult. Does this make them feel powerless, frustrated, dismissed by children?

When they ask for something specifically to improve the lunchtime they lack confidence that it will happen, 'But I did ask for the summer time for a canopy that can go in and out. If that comes off well I don't know', (Line 1798). 'We've asked for them to be fixed but it hasn't happened yet', (Line 1839). There is an apathetic acceptance that having asked for something it's okay not to have heard the outcome and a defeatist tone that it probably will not, 'come off'. Perhaps this is their experience of having asked for things before. I wonder though if they present such a defeatist, downbeat persona when making suggestions are they taken seriously by the school management. Might they gain something from such situations, seeking sympathy for themselves as voiceless victims of a school system.

### **Challenging role**

The supervisors talk about there being so much to do and they say it is a challenging role (Line 435) but they enjoy this (Line 1619). I think they were telling me that although it is challenge, they are up to the challenge and enjoy aspects of it. Certainly before I started this research I thought their role was challenging and discussed this when explaining my story. The background literature did not really assert this strongly enough though.

They also confirm that it's not always, 'horrible', (Line 439). They like the variety (Line 441), the time limits and the holidays. But does this imply they have a sense of being trapped. 'You get away after an hour', (Line 445).

I had not thought of this before but they say that when they started it was scary, '...the children were a bit scary at first because there was a lot of them together', (Line 1480). As somebody used to being in schools I do not think of the children in this way but I can see how nearly 200 children on a playground at the same time could be quite an imposing sight. If they communicate this feeling to the children does it give the children an upper hand? They have got used to it though because it was only scary at first.

Although the role is a challenge they confirm they do not continue for the money, 'Well if it was that bad I'd hang me pinny up. I'm not that desperate for a few quid', (Line 1621). They are right, the pay isn't a lot so perhaps they do not have a sense of being trapped. I'm interested in the 'pinny'. Perhaps it's me but this creates an image of a motherly figure, baking and nurturing children. Do they see themselves in the same way? They certainly value the nurturing aspects of their role and have referred to their 'parenting' role.

Returning to the pay they talk about this again later, 'The pay isn't brilliant but you know what you're getting when you take it. So there must be something about the job that we like, cos it isn't the money', (Line 1655). I agree with them. They have talked about the joy of children, about facilitating their development, nurturing them and taking pleasure in observing the children's development over time. I think they are genuinely motivated by the difference that a positive lunchtime can have for a child and they are keen to be a part of enabling this change. 'It's an important job that we do', (Line 1661). I realise that convenience

is probably a factor but surely there would be other convenient (and perhaps better paid) part-time jobs in the area? Should this be another theme, something about motivation and satisfaction? Perhaps the challenge of the role is part of the motivation as it brings a sense of achievement.

### **A skilled role**

Lines 452-468. Lines 653-680. Line 793. Patience, having a balanced view, able to think on your feet, stamina and discretion. Lots of different trades (referee, mum and doctor). Versatile, understanding, sensitive, respect for children, non-judgemental (though there are instances when they make assumptions about children's family life). These are skills a supervisor needs, and they possess them.

Line 1174. '...keep to your word'.

Line 1187, 'Consistency between us is good', (which harks back to the strength of the team).

Line 1772. Impartiality.

They can reflect on their strengths, which is positive.

Where do they get these skills from? Line 485. Doing things naturally, gut feeling, an intuitive approach is suggested. They talk about this again later, 'You've got to feel like it', (Line 598). 'Over the years we've developed a sixth sense. We kind of know when something is going on over there', (Line 1359).

Does this imply that being a supervisor might be a vocation or is it about life experiences and being a parent? If intuition is required then would training help with this? Alternatively they may be saying this in the absence of any training, as they have had to rely on their own store of personal resources. When asked

specifically about training they seem sure that it wouldn't help. 'You learn on the job yourself', (Line 1526). However they think that some specific training would be helpful, such as First Aid and Drugs (Lines 1541-1542). They'd also like to know how to handle a fight (Line 1550) even though they said earlier they do not really have many fights. I think this is fear and wanting to know just in case the problem arises. They want to be prepared (and they talked earlier of being prepared). Training on, '...the ones that don't seem to respond to anything that we do', (Line 1545). 'Some of them though the teachers can't even control', (Line 1548). There are some children who seem difficult to reach, even for teachers, which suggests they think teachers may be more skilled at managing behaviour than they are. Or is this about children's respect for teachers and the range of sanctions that they are able to impose? Or is it them trying to defend their position to convince me that having problems with some children is not about deficits in their skills?

Line 600. They have to be confident and communicate to the children that they are in charge (links to shared culture). Later (Line 1523) they reflect on how children can sense confidence in an adult.

Line 487. Experience and learning from it. Suggests they are reflective practitioners.

Line 503. 'Sometimes you have to paint on the smile'. I think the supervisors feel that have to act a part, present a persona. They also feel obliged to please the teachers because they view them as the more powerful. It's a bit like a child trying to please an adult. They act out a persona to the children too (Line 603). Later they talk about bluffing their way through (Line 982).

Line 540. Perhaps linked with their status, their concerns about lack of formal qualification and also their belief in their own skills, the supervisors feel that working in a class as an assistant would be, '...dead easy after this', (Line 541). This links in with the sense of responsibility, the many demands to fulfil practical tasks and the playground culture.

Acting out a role comes up again when talking about skills. They talk about, 'codology', (Line 641) and 'kidology' (Line 1171). At Line 1178 they describe how they may appear to be talking to a teacher about a child but actually they are talking, '...about the price of fish for two minutes'. When they sense there may be an incident they, 'Hang around. Make your presence felt, saunter around towards them. You pretend you're watching something else...', (Line 1373). I think this is about the shared understanding of the lunchtime context too, as children read the behaviour of the supervisors and desist from whatever they were going to do. Nothing is needed to be said.

They use humour too. It's about giving children some attention but making light of it. There is something here about the shared nature of this between the supervisors and the children.

They capture something about the relationship that they have with children, which is different to that of a teacher (Line 651). They talk about respecting the children as individuals and being there for them (nurturing again). Mutual attachment is mentioned at Line 939 but also how they cannot develop this with some children.

They worry about quiet children, who do not interact with them to enable this relationship to be formed (Line 691). They seem to feel that they might be letting

these children down. I do not know if something about relationships with children and respect is separate to what I've put in this subheading.

The children not behaving as well for supervisors as they do for teachers is discussed at Line 971. Alongside this they recognise that children who are a problem for them are a problem for the teachers too. I think they are telling me that the problem isn't related to their management it's about the children. They do not want to be blamed or take responsibility.

Later they say they have instructions not to talk to parents about children (Line 1440) and they appear to appreciate the need for confidentiality. 'Yeah it's about being professional', (Line 1448). This is qualified with, 'Yeah it's a level of professional', (Line 1449). I think they are making a distinction between themselves and probably teachers, who they think have the more, 'professional' status. I think they feel inferior to teachers.

I have often heard school staff complain about supervisors who shout. 'Well I used to shout but I don't now cos I've learned that it doesn't work', (Line 1501). The supervisors learn from experience. They are reflective. They are honest too, admitting that at first they did not get it right. They go on to say that you have to stay calm. I suppose this is about being a role model and creating a calm environment. If the supervisors are quiet and calm, and respectful then the children will be too. Are they trying to create a shared understanding of how to behave at lunchtimes? My experience though suggests that lunchtimes are anything but quiet and calm – perhaps it's what they hope to achieve?



## **Being needed**

I am developing a feeling that the supervisors want to feel needed. Firstly by the school needing them to take on the job and then by the children.

Line 470. 'Ar they must like us'.

Line 473. 'We must be getting through to them in some way'.

It's a good lunchtime when they haven't been needed (Line 738). This isn't just about the supervisors thinking that they are there to sort problems because they go on to say it's about children being able to entertain themselves. This is what play is about – the context being such that they can play independently. The supervisors have an understanding of children's play.

When talking about the role of a supervisor they share some anecdotes about being needed (Lines 850-872). One even says, 'I thrive on that. I love it', (Line 863). This boosts their esteem, elevates their position in a child's life. But they are aware of the need to respect boundaries around this (Line 867).

Line 1002. The supervisors realise that, 'We're teaching them all sorts really aren't we?' and go on to state, 'Good job we're here', (Line 1003). This reinforces how they are needed because if they weren't, who would teach the children, 'all sorts'. They use the word, 'teaching' which aligns them with the teachers in some way. Do they want to be teachers? Is it possible they have unrealised aspirations to be teachers?

'We do need to help the children to play', (Line 1849). They are needed and without them the children wouldn't know how to play.

## **Space**

Being outside, having a big field (Line 710). Space is a valued facility. I assume this is about physically having space but may also include ownership of space – the more there is the more that can be shared around. It prevents territories forming. The supervisors do not seem concerned that if there is more space it makes it more difficult for them to supervise (they realise this, but it isn't an issue for them). Is space on the playground about freedom and choices? These are related to what constitutes play.

They are frustrated by limits to space that adults impose. They give the bushes as an example (Line 717) even though this would mean they couldn't see the children (and being able to see is important to the supervisors – so this would be a conflict). Potentially safety may be an issue, and the blame for this (Line 722).

They think that children need outside space. 'Wet playtimes are the worst when you know they've never been over the doorstep from when they've come into school', (Line 1585). Of course the children may read the supervisors dread of wet playtimes but my experience, and from what other supervisors have said, wet lunchtimes are generally a concern. My view is that the supervisors are right; children do need outside space. The sense of lots of children being indoors in damp rooms within an unfamiliar context confuses them (usually the class is about working at desks and the teacher in control, and now it isn't). It's a novelty too.

## **Facilitating**

Line 832. Facilitating. They've just introduced this word and I recall that this is an idea that they talk of again. I'm also forming an idea that the supervisors think

they are in charge of the children and control the lunchtime. They nurture and they protect. They are needed. All of this is about their duty towards the children. They are frustrated in fulfilling their duty because they perceive teachers to have little interest in lunchtimes and what the supervisors do and chose not to communicate with them. However, the supervisors have a joy of children and the way that they play. They genuinely seem to enjoy aspects of their job. They also appreciate and respect that the children have their own lunchtime culture.

With older children (expectations/assumptions made about age) they encourage them to solve their own problems (Line 878). They encourage problem solving with friendship problems (Line 1856). This is about preparation for the future as well as enjoying the present. This simple statement involves such a lot, and I am so pleased that although these supervisors haven't been on a training course, or, at their own admission, had much time to reflect on what their role entails, they have obviously, somehow, developed an understanding of what skills children need to develop. Are this group unique in this or is this something that adults who have experience with children generally come to realise? Certainly I do not recall this being in the background literature. All that was discussed was the deficits in the supervisors. This is a much more positive and affirming view of what supervisors think.

Line 891. 'For me it's about their potential. I like to think of them as the half full glass. You never know how they are going to turn out'. I assume this is about wanting to facilitate their development. It's also about seeing positives in children. I think it is inconsistent with the earlier views about knowing how children are going to turn out based on knowledge of families.

Lines 894-900. They take the idea of facilitating a little further and describe how they understand about setting up situations for children and then standing back and not getting too involved thereby giving the children independence. This returns to the notion of what play actually is. It is also about respecting children's culture and autonomy. Furthermore it's about them knowing children and understanding them.

The supervisors are prepared to challenge what children might be told at home. Line 1726, 'My dada says do this if somebody does that to you, you hit back'. 'You challenge this but it's hard going against their dad'. Line 1730, 'It's not sorting it out by non-violent means and go to the dinner lady or whatever. It's reactive'. This says that the supervisors recognise that part of their role is about teaching children how to resolve difficulties, which might include seeking adult help.

### **Language (generally and about feelings)**

Different words are used to express a range of feelings that the supervisors have about lunchtimes. These are listed in the right-hand margin notes.

They also use humour a lot. I do not know if this is to diffuse something, a way of coping, a social skill for bonding the team, or whatever. Having been with the supervisors I think it's probably an aspect of their social interaction, to do with mutual banter and knowing one another well. They also use it a little to illustrate how silly something is, such as when talking about the ban on conkers, 'How many kids do you know that have been killed by a raging mad conker?', (Line 329).

I realised fairly early into the interview that the supervisors use visual words (watch, eye eye, see, keep an eye on things, you see). I think this communicates something about the very core of how they view (visual word!) their role. It is about seeing everything that goes on.

The buddies are, '...just another set of eyes'. (Line 1337).

'I'll just keep an eye, watch them', (Line 1364).

Line 1471. '...you'll maybe watch out for them'.

Line 732. 'It's a good lunchtime when you can see them all and you know what they are doing'. This isn't just about seeing children it's a sense of control. They need to know and they need to feel the control (they talk of being in charge in Line 357). They do not like it when children go up and down corridors during wet lunchtimes (Line 1613) because they cannot see them and do not feel, 'in charge'.

They also want to give children the space to play independently. 'Well supervising the children, watching the children. Keeping an eye on them, generally but not too much. Just being watchful I suppose'.

Some negative emotions that are named link to the difficulties over communication, 'Yeah I get annoyed sometimes...', (Line 1263). '...got yourself to top doe', (Line 1273).

Frustration is used (Lines 1379 and 1578). In outlining my story I did think that the supervisors would talk of frustrations and frustration about things to do with teachers have already been discussed in this diary.

When they talk of their feelings about their role there seems to be a dual aspect to it – the frustration (with teachers and communication in particular) and pleasure (related to being with the children, the variety, the sense of feeling they are making a difference). ‘Enjoy it’, (Line 1578). Again, in my story I said that I thought the supervisors would express some enjoyment of their role. I do not think the supervisors enjoying lunchtimes was something that came up in the background literature.

### **Parenting**

I do not know what to call this and it’s possibly linked to nurturing, or relationships – I’ll see how things turn out. They had talked about being like a parent and in Line 931 they assert that they listen more than parents and also that they know the children better – they know that they aren’t angels all of the time. They feel they have a more balanced view of children. They are making assumptions about parents and their conceptions of their own children. I am assuming that the supervisors are portraying a unique relationship with the children, which is closed to other adults.

Line 935. The issue of protecting children comes up, and their belief that parents are perhaps over-protective in a way that they are not.

Having a sixth sense and predicting that an incident is likely to occur the supervisors think this comes with parenting (Line 1366). I assume they are referring to their experiences with their own children.

### **Different to teachers**

I asked about how they are different to teachers and they immediately said they did not need to be so distant or authoritarian (Line 955). They think they are

more nurturing than teachers. Able to have more fun. I think this is an interesting perspective on the role of the teacher. I would assume that if asked the teachers would say that they are there to nurture children and develop close relationships with them. Are the supervisors trying to create, or perpetuate, the idea that they have a unique position in the child's lunchtime world? Does this give them power? Does it make them feel special and valued? Does it make them feel better about themselves, or in comparison with teachers? Have they got a chip on their shoulders when comparing themselves to teachers?

Line 966. They make assumptions about children's thinking (because they know children) and think that they associate supervisors with having a nice time at lunchtime. This is a positive view, which is inconsistent with some of the literature about the misery of lunchtimes and the problems they create.

They believe that some children do not respect them in the same way that they respect the teachers (Line 1315). They accept some responsibility (and perhaps blame) for this, 'Well you have to show respect to earn it back do not you, so it's down to us'. I think they are right in this but they have said a lot that suggests they respect and enjoy the children.

### **Rewards and Sanctions**

When asked about their involvement in school reward systems there is vagueness to their response. 'We sometimes give them lunchtime stickers', (Line 1082). This implies it's inconsistent and doesn't really explain how it fits with the whole school system. I'm not sure if this is about not feeling involved in the whole school system, or communication, or their status. The supervisors may not really value the impact of reward systems. Though they do go on to describe a

situation where some children got a special mention in assembly (Line 1084) and this is something they value.

Line 1405.'...there's no punishment at the end of it'. Line 1410, 'That's not a punishment'. The supervisors seem keen for children to receive some punishment (such as a withdrawal of play station and golf). They believe that children know that a punishment is unlikely and feel that parents do not support the school when punishment, in the form of exclusion, is given. I do not know if this is because they think that children will learn from being punished or whether it's simply about trying to make them feel bad.

### **Checking back with Supervisors**

It has been so long since I was at the school talking with the supervisors that I decided to go back to let them know how it was going. Had a good chat really, with the supervisors and then the Head. Told them what I was doing with their interviews. Much laughter and suggestions of throwing them on the fire. They think I must be mad. But actually underneath all this humour I thought they were quite proud that what they said in an informal chat over a coffee and a cake was 'research'. They couldn't believe how many transcript pages there were. Feel I've got a good relationship with them. To be honest I think the supervisors were more interested than the Head. But I suppose they have invested something of themselves in this research – a thought which cheers me because this suggests they were digging a bit deeper into their thoughts when they talked with me. This is what I wanted – the core, the richness. Goody.

The Head left us to it and I explained what I had done. I gave them copies of the transcripts and let them skim through. I asked them if there was anything in particular they wanted to chat about. I also talked over a few examples and



explained why I had written what I did in the left and right margins. I let them pick out others for us to discuss too. Basically it was to see if I was completely off the mark or was I getting to the nub of what they wanted to say. I also talked about some of the themes that seemed to be coming out. It's not final yet though. This was just the start of it. They agreed with what I was doing. They were interested in how I interpreted what they said, things like when they talk about some days being better than others but how most days are okay and how this suggests they are able to take a balanced perspective. Another example was in the joy of children's play, and being with the children. Communication and status issues were raised as further examples.

Initially there was much hilarity, trying to recognise who might have said what. On the whole though their thoughts were consistent with what I had done. I had some confidence that they weren't just agreeing with me. By now we've got to the stage where they talk openly and confidently with me. Even as they looked at some of transcript they would question and discuss amongst themselves. I suppose what I wanted was an analysis that made good sense – and the supervisors' reactions suggest that's what I've got. Goody again!

I still haven't put things into clusters yet. Again, I'm wary of doing this until I've got the initial analysis, 'right'. I do not want to come up with clusters and then try to find things in the text to confirm what I am saying – I want to be open-minded when reading the transcripts and the post-its.

Reading this back I wonder about bias. Why did I use the word, 'goody'? Was I so pleased with myself for being seen to do something right? Is this about affirming how good I am about interpreting something? Part of me thinks not. I am genuinely interested in giving the supervisors an opportunity to share their

story and I was pleased that they felt what I had done adequately represented what they wanted to say. But then this takes me to questioning the member validation. It isn't generally used in IPA, partly because the analysis involves and values the researcher's interpretation. Aside from this though I have to ask myself if the supervisors really did understand and concur with what I had done. Would it have been possible for them to tell me I'd got something wrong, or suggest alternative views? Perhaps not. I like to think they would have done because of the relationship we had developed but I may be wrong. At the very least I hope it left them feeling that they had been involved and that I was sincere in gaining their feedback – because I was. But perhaps I shouldn't put too much weight behind their validation.

### **Authenticity**

As I am writing in this diary thoughts come to me again about authenticity. I realise that I hope to present the supervisors in a positive light. I really value the work that supervisors do and I have enjoyed working with them. However, I must be open to interpretations of the interviews that might present them in a less than favourable light. One thing that comes to mind is the idea of responsibility. They are concerned about being blamed and they are concerned with the lack of communication from teachers. If I take this at face value I could make assumptions (as I have done) about the lack of power and status that supervisors have in school. However, what if I turn this around and suggest that as the lunchtime is their responsibility, why then do they not be more assertive and challenge teachers about some of the communication issues. They come across as a strong team so they would have peer support if they should choose to challenge. Is it too convenient for them to blame teachers? Perhaps they feel something of an, 'under-dog', in the school system and it makes them feel better

to be critical of the teachers. It may also be that in fact communication is actually okay but they just do not see it this way. Either way, their story is that they perceive they are blamed and that communication from teachers is poor. This is their story.

When they discuss children who are a problem they are keen to explain the children are a problem for the teachers too and I have assumed they are telling me that the problem isn't related to their management it's about the children. They do not want to be blamed, or take responsibility. An idea is forming now which is about the supervisors telling me a story which presents them as skilled and reflective practitioners who take pleasure in children's learning through play. They hold a unique position in the children's lunchtime world. Alongside this there are problems with communication, some individuals and safety for example and none of these problems are caused by them, nor can they change them. All of this is the responsibility of the teachers or the parents. Am I over simplifying what they are saying? If I understand them correctly is this actually how it is at lunchtime? Would children, parents and teachers say the same thing or would their stories be a flip version of the supervisors' story? Is reality somewhere in the middle (and here I must acknowledge my generally liberal stance on most matters where I believe the mid-ground is often the place to be). Would it be reasonable of me to suggest that where there are difficult issues and conflicts at lunchtimes these are to some extent due to poor communication generally without wishing to ascribe blame for this to any party? If I am being honest though I would admit that I do have some sympathy with the supervisors and their position in school. My experience suggests they do not have the confidence to speak within the school system, or if they do, their voices are not well heard.

This is all just musings at an early stage. It may well change as the analysis continues.

## **Reflective Diary Part 2: A record of the personal dialogue during the analysis of Interview 2**

### **Team**

Line 4. They say they meet before lunch and use the phrase, '...need to tell one another', and this is said again at Line 11. The use of the word, 'need', strikes me as significant as this suggests something about sharing, supporting, maintaining the sense of, 'team'. It also implies they need to tell each other because there isn't anybody else to tell. They value this so much that they arrive early. They have developed friendships and care for each other.

Line 13. 'It helps like, cos if I know something's gone on at her house last night. I'll know that she mightn't want to be bothered with things, so I'll step in if there's a problem'. This implies that one of the supervisors has some issues at home that the others are aware of, and will support with. There must be trust between them. I think this is such a strong signal of them being a team that genuinely does support each other, without having to explicitly ask for support.

Adopting a rota has helped them to get involved in different areas. 'You get to know how things work everywhere and not just your bit', (Line 270). 'I think this way's better because we work more together and we all know what's going on', (Line 276). This gives them variety and means that if there is a less favoured job they do not have to do it for too long.

They compare their team with previous teams, 'They wouldn't help you if you were stuck with anything', (Line 274). They are suggesting that they do help

each other and that there are times when they do get, 'stuck'. They know they aren't perfect as individuals but as a team they can pull together. It's a shared responsibility.

When talking about behaviour management they recognise that some handle situations differently and they could show each other (Line 485).

Together they question and explore the issues of behaviour management (from Line 473). There is a sense of really wanting to know and understand and a willingness to learn and to adapt. They are a reflective and supportive team.

Getting on well and trusting each other help foster a team that can support each other (Line 540). I'm not sure how this develops and as with much of what seems to happen about lunchtime supervision it's happenchance that this particular team do get on and trust each other. If they did not the strength of the team might be less and maybe then the supervision and the children's lunchtime experiences would be different.

Without needing to talk about it they know each other well and know where their skills and likes and dislikes are (Line 553). Not only do the supervisors have an understanding of the children's lunchtime world they develop an understanding of each other's lunchtime world. As individuals they are balancing a lot of things during that brief lunchtime hour.

They feel they have to be there for each other because nobody else is, or understand what it's like (Line 576). It's a lonely job, or it could be.

Working as a team helps to deal with those situations where children try to play adults off against each other (Line 690). The supervisors have to support each other and be consistent for this to be effective. They have to communicate and

they have to have shared understandings. Given they do not formally meet I assume that this happens by chance.

Line 702. 'Yeah and it's good for us too because sometimes I do not know how to handle something but I like somebody else to help me out'. I have probably said this before but this willingness to express a lack of confidence and seek support is incredibly brave. They must have personal confidence to be able to say this and also confidence in the team that it's okay and the right thing to do. Although I suggest they have confidence I am aware that I have also reflected on their lack of confidence. I am trying to understand this and I suppose the difference is between personal confidence and confidence in each other as opposed to confidence in being seen to be capable of doing a good job. Not sure if it's as simple as this and I'll need to think about it a little more.

The supportive strength of the team may also have developed because they feel they only have each other to seek support from so it makes them more inclined to pull together. 'And we know we can turn to one another', (Line 719). 'More than you can to the teachers really', (Line 720). 'They do not understand what it's like out there', (Line 721). I get an image of a battle field when they say, 'out there'.

They say that they know themselves and each other well. They know what their strengths and weaknesses and likes and dislikes are and work around each other taking this into account (Line 708). They can adopt different styles of management as it suits, 'Like Mr Nasty and Mr Nice', (Line 716) and work together to complement each other.

The team is a powerful and incredibly supportive body. 'Us working together. If we do that then we can deal with anything', (Line 931). I've just had a thought

that where they think that teachers do not consult with them and that as supervisors they have limited status, what if the teachers, and the Head, actually view the team of supervisors as a formidable team?

They mock teachers at Line 1004. Making fun of others or being critical can be a way of cementing relationships within a team.

Although they say they are very busy they do not necessarily think that having more supervisors would help. It may confuse things with children playing them off against each other (Line 1073). They are suggesting that there are an optimum number of supervisors that make a team and offer effective supervision. I think that some of the difficulties they have raised might be addressed in ways other than having more staff, for instance communication wouldn't necessarily be improved by having more supervisors, but could be improved with an agreed communication process.

### **Status and working conditions**

Line 22. The lack of somewhere to talk in confidence is identified as not being right. They do not feel comfortable using the staffroom. Is this about them feeling they are not worthy or have they been made to feel uncomfortable entering the staffroom? My own experience is that staffrooms can be rather daunting. There are sometimes certain (unspoken) rules about seats and cups. I'm interested that it's called a, 'Staffroom', which would imply availability for all staff of the school, but clearly this isn't the understanding of the supervisors. Perhaps they do not feel that they are part of the, 'staff'.

Not feeling appreciated is a theme that came up in Interview 1 and does again in Interview 2. Line 81. 'No, but we don't get told we've done a good job either do we?'

They reflect that if they do not value themselves others will not value them either, Line 87, 'We should be more careful not to put ourselves down. If we do it, others will surely follow suit'. I think a lack of confidence is a significant issue for the supervisors and they need to be told they are doing a good job and are appreciated. This takes me to wonder if they are mindful to praise children and tell them they are getting on well. It may be that this is something they really value and so do it naturally. Alternatively it may be that because they do not feel appreciated it is hard to show appreciation for others. However, when I think back to what they said in Interview 1 there is a lot about enjoying children, nurturing and praising.

I recall one of the job descriptions that I had reviewed saying something about needing to be able to stand and walk for periods of time. The supervisors agree with this when talking about kneeling down to children, 'It does hurt my knees though', (Line 96). I had not previously given much thought to the physical demands of the job.

Line 179. 'The teachers wouldn't put up with that though, but we have to'. It is okay to be rude to supervisors but not teachers. Why do they have to put up with it – who said they must? How has this culture developed where it is okay to be rude to certain adults in the school context?

Line 239. 'I used to keep telling them to clear away but I got fed up of doing it. I was like a broken record'. So the children repeatedly ignored the direct instructions of the supervisor such that ultimately the supervisor got fed up and



presumably the children were then able to misuse the quiet area. The children and the supervisors have together created a lunchtime culture in which the supervisor can be ignored and eventually children can do as they please. But the supervisors do not generally suggest that there is mayhem so the children must be complying with them to a large extent.

The supervisors have ideas about how to improve lunchtimes but lack confidence in sharing these. They feel they do not have a right to speak. 'I don't know. I sometimes feel like it's not our place', (Line 252). This really jars with their belief that others in school do not appreciate what goes on at lunchtime or have any interest in it. So, if the supervisors do not make suggestions for improvements, who will?

They feel that when they do make suggestions nothing happens, 'But we've said things in the past and nothing happens so you just get disheartened', (Line 258). They do not have a sense of ownership as they feel they must ask to make changes. This conflicts with their desire to have control. They worry that if they did make changes, '... there'd be hell to pay', (Line 262) and yet they cite one instance when the Head thought the rota idea was a good one, 'She even said she'd leave it to us', (Line 265). They haven't learned from this experience and have instead adopted a defeatist attitude.

The Head makes decisions (Line 293) but they claim they would have to say if the Head made a decision that was hard for them (Line 305). But would they – given the earlier comments that they made about being disheartened.

Line 288. They talk of being outside in the cold for 40 minutes.

It is a demanding job. 'It's hellish sometimes isn't it?', (Line 515). This is a strong statement to make. 'Don't ask me why but some days it can be awful', (Line 580).

The supervisors feel that they need to look busy, and are anxious about who might be watching them (Line 838). This may be related to the lack of a job description and lack of on-going feedback and review. They trust each other but feel judged by others at school.

With wet lunchtimes it is the Head who decides whether the children are in or out but the supervisors have to, '...get on with it', (Line 851). Unfortunately the teachers may not like this as the classroom can be left messy. I'm not sure if the supervisors feel partly responsible for the untidy state of classrooms.

Line 866. 'We could talk to Mrs. H. See what she thinks'. The supervisors are keen to consult about an idea before putting something into place.

Children are rude to them, and it seems that currently they do not have to apologise, 'I'd like to get an apology if they've been rude', (Line 1058). I feel sure that things would be handled differently if children were rude to teachers.

Line 1087. 'I'm not being funny but we don't get paid an awful lot'. They are quite correct in this and given they have a role in children's learning and future development I cannot help but wonder if they should be better rewarded. This may not be through better pay necessarily but at least better working conditions and being made to feel more a part of the school and well respected.

They realise that they lack confidence and do not speak up (Line 1085) but feel they've done this before and have been let down by the Head who makes promises that aren't kept (Line 1095). I am beginning to wonder if their status is

tied in with their lack of confidence. They have convinced themselves that they have low status and find opportunities to reinforce this belief.

### **Their role**

Line 38. 'I think lunchtime supervisor sounds better'. They are concerned with what they are called and the perception that might be created by different job titles. They are so insecure in their own status that they need a title that sounds good. This seems rather sad to me.

They do go on to clarify that being a, 'lunchtime supervisor' describes their job better as it's more than being a, 'dinner lady', or, 'supervising'. 'Like for example when we play with children, that's not supervising is it really?', (Line 42). They want a job title that describes what they do and the best of those used is, 'lunchtime supervisor', but even this doesn't adequately reflect what they do.

Clarifying what they are responsible for is something that I would have thought would be essential. When asked about a job description they reply, 'What job description? I've never seen one', (Line 64). Why haven't they asked for one? 'I just got on with it', (Line 66). When reading through the transcripts I often get a sense that they, 'just get on with it'. They seem very accepting and do not challenge things that aren't right. Is this because they are happy to do things as they see fit, or is it because they do not have the confidence to ask for something?

None of them recalled having a proper interview. It seems that just as they took the job to suit their personal convenience, so the school offered the job to suit their convenience. This strikes me as taking a risk because the school would not know they were employing somebody of the right calibre. Particularly as there is

a reliance on, 'common-sense', (Line 74). Further there is no account of formal supervisor appraisal or feedback. It seems that the supervisors are simply, 'left to it'. This is something they themselves have said they want to happen. But assumptions are being made that the people employed as supervisors have common sense and can be left to, 'get on with it', without appraising what they are doing. In Interview 1 the supervisors said that training was not required because much of what they do is intuition and learning on the job. Being offered a position and being left to use common sense is consistent with this view. But is there evidence that supervisors do possess these qualities? Is it really all about convenience, pressures of time and people getting on to make the best of a situation and not feeling confident to challenge it? It's all a bit too relaxed in my view, with the potential for the supervision at lunchtimes to be about policing and routines and this would be such a waste of an opportunity to have a positive impact on children's development. This is something that I reflected on when reviewing some of the job descriptions that I reviewed.

The supervisors think that people in school are just happy that they turn up each day to, 'baby sit the children', (Line 84). The selection process and lack of on-going consultation could easily be interpreted in this way. Alternatively it may be that the Head knew the individuals anyway and had a degree of confidence in their abilities. The Head could well have since observed the supervisors at work and been satisfied in how they were doing the job. However the lack of formal opportunity to feed this back is a shame.

Line 159. 'They just like to feel as if they're protected'. What do they base this on? Is it more that the supervisors think they should protect children? Protect them from what? What dangers do the supervisors anticipate occurring during lunchtime? They have already said, in Interview 1, that we should trust children

to make the right choices and not over protect them because they will learn from taking risks. Does protecting children fulfil a need in the supervisors to be needed? Risk taking and being needed were issues raised in Interview 1.

Line 842. The supervisors sum up their role. 'I think watching the children, getting to know them, being available if need be. I think that's what our job is about, not just dealing with problems'. However they do not think that others have the same view or maybe do not think about it. They have the view that some (I assume teachers) do not want to be bothered by the supervisors (Line 846).

Their role at lunchtime is about teaching children to be more independent, to help children to enjoy their lunch, to look after them when they play and about manners (Line 872). This is more than some of the job descriptions suggest which focus on dealing with problem behaviour.

Line 981. 'She couldn't make anything of them, not even the new starters'. The role of the supervisor is seen as making something of a child. What do they mean by this statement? Is this about shaping a child to cooperate with supervisors?

Line 1100. They wonder if the Head thinks that because they get paid to do the job they should sort it out more. But then they have a discussion between themselves as to whether or not they can. They are really very unsure about their power. They think they are different to teachers and they feel that they need to be given permission to change things. There is a perception that when something was changed they were, 'told off', (Line 1104). This creates a visual image for me of them being like children getting, 'told off', by adults. There seems such confusion surrounding who and what they are. They are similar to but not actual parents and teachers, and now seem like children. They called

themselves, 'in-betweenies' and they really are 'in-between' everything. They are floundering to find an identity.

In their discussions they come to realise that there probably are things that they could change provided they fit in with the current systems (Line 1119). I think that some clarity is needed which could be easily achieved through improved communication. Again though I do not know why this has not been addressed.

Doing a reasonable job (Line 1183) is acceptable. Normal days are when things go, 'okay'. The supervisors are being realistic; they know that each day will bring ups and downs.

### **Nurture**

Line 46. They say they encourage children and praise them. They value the nurturing role they have. They do this through giving a child attention or distracting them when hurt, 'While they're thinking about what you've asked them they forget they've hurt themselves', (Line 117). They liken it to mothering (Line 120) and say it's about, 'codology', (Line 120) which they talked about in Interview 1.

Line 145. 'Be there for them...'

Line 156. 'You have to be there for them, especially the little ones'.

### **Play**

Line 42. They play with children and they appreciate this is not about supervising them. Their role is not wholly about policing or checking their behaviour or teaching them. Their role is about joining in with children's play and appreciating the play as it is.

Playing with children comes up again at Line 194. The supervisors say that the children, '...love it when you join in with them', (Line 200). There is a sharing of experience. However the supervisors know that they need join in for only so long and then, 'bow out'.

The children need a range of choices. They need things to be attractive. Children need facilities and activities set up properly so that there is a shared understanding of how to, for instance, use a quiet area (Line 231). The supervisors say the children need to be involved (so I must assume that they aren't) and that responsibility for this lies with the Head and teachers, in consultation with them (Line 241). The supervisors seem to be saying that they want joint responsibility for properly setting up play experiences for children but part of them also seems to want to blame the Head, teachers and lack of funding. 'It's not down to us is it?', (Line 247). Equally they think that children should be consulted in any proposed changes or new suggestions (Line 353). They value the views of children and appreciate that children need to be involved if new initiatives have any chance of success. I recall that in the background literature research was reported that said children wanted to be involved in decisions about playground initiatives.

They think that children are more motivated to play than having something to eat (Line 370). The supervisors think that children need time to play. In their view one of the purposes of lunchtime is to provide opportunities for children to play. This is interesting in the light of the literature about children's free time experiences being reduced and is consistent with the argument for retaining time to play at school.

When talking about buddies the supervisors assert, 'Well they need to play as well don't they', (Line 789). So the supervisors are identifying play as a need.

Getting on with each other and cooperative play is desirable (Line 936). 'Most of them do really most of the time', (Line 939).

Although children need to play the supervisors are concerned that children need adult guidance to learn how to play and to avoid problems (Line 1008 and 1011). My view is that it's not about avoiding problems but learning how to resolve them, and I recall the supervisors did talk about this in the first interview.

There is a joy of playing with children (Line 1206) but there is little time to do it sometimes. They reaffirm that playing with children is part of their role too, it's not just about chivvying and telling off (Line 1215).

Line 1216. 'There's a lot more to what we do and it's hard to explain it. You have to see it really. Aye nobody tells you those bits do they? And them's the best bits. It's what makes you keep coming'. They are right, there has not been clear guidance on what the job entails. Their role has many dimensions and they have said much of it they do without thinking and it's about being able to be intuitive. What is clear is that they do not limit their view of their role to smooth organisation and managing behaviour but they encompass much more, 'the best bits', which they really enjoy and these are what motivate them to continue. As they have said before the pay isn't good enough to make it worthwhile if the job was so dreadful.

They really value their role and the impact they can have on children's lives (Line 1250). As they said themselves, 'You say it like that and it makes us sound grand doesn't it?', (Line 1252). They value themselves and the role they have.



## **Individuals**

There are some individual children who need supervisors to support their play. The supervisors engineer situations (Line 206) where somebody else joins in. They realise that playing with an adult is not the same as playing with other children.

They need to make themselves accessible to all children (Line 663). Children need to know where they are for security (emotional security I assume from the way it is said) and for First Aid (Line 676). The supervisors have to be everywhere, know everyone, be available to everyone and ensure that lunch is well ordered. The supervisors need to ensure children are playing and socialising and are happy and safe. It's a tall order.

## **Facilitate**

Line 44. 'It's about being the wind beneath their wings'. The supervisors set things up for children and stand back to allow the children to take their play experiences where they want. This is what play is about according to the literature and the supervisors have really understood this (without having been trained to think like this).

## **Social Skills**

The literature suggests that at lunchtime children learn social skills to enjoy the present but also to prepare for the future. Again without having been on a training course the supervisors have grasped this idea. Line 47, '...and getting on with each other. Well it's what they need when they're up, adults like'.

## **Relationship with children**

When speaking with the children the supervisors like to join them in their space. This could be interpreted as a power issue but the way they talk about it is more about the relationship they want to develop with children. Line 94, 'I always think it's nicer than looking down. That's it. You're on their level then'.

Line 99. 'I like to look them in the eye'. This is whether the supervisor is telling off or saying something nice. Again, it's about the relationship they are developing with children. It also creates an image that they are saying things privately to children, not shouting across a space. It is more intimate. It can also be more assertive. Eye contact says you mean what you are saying. It draws the listener and the speaker together in a shared moment.

Around Line 160 the supervisors talk about physical contact with children and the need to use common sense not to get into potentially compromising situations. They think that teachers worry too much about this because they think that children need some gentle physical contact.

Children also need to be shown an adult cares about them. 'You kinda show them that you care through little things. Like having a bit of banter with them. Showing them you've got a sense of humour', (Line 166).

Mutual respect between supervisors and children is important (Line 184).

Supervisors need to be approachable and have a trusting relationship with children so that they feel able to share concerns (Line 226).

Having a rota allows them to get to know more children (Line 281). So too does moving around (Line 666).

Knowing children's names is useful in terms of developing relationships with them but also for controlling/managing behaviour (Line 385).

Having banter and getting on well with children helps to build relationships and mutual respect such that they are more likely to be compliant (Line 598).

If they make a mistake supervisors will make amends with children but, '...without losing face with them', (Line 638). I wonder how they would lose face. It's an interesting idea that apologising may demean their status with the children in some way. The supervisors want to have the upper hand in the relationship which implies a lack of confidence in their status and a degree of vulnerability possibly.

### **Knowing and understanding children**

When discussing physical contact with children the supervisors explain that it's about knowing what individual children might need and want. They are keen for the child to take the lead though, 'I was thinking, when it does happen, I always let the child initiate it', (Line 126). 'You're right, and I think it depends on who the child is. You have to know them to know whether they want comfort, and how they like it', (Line 129). How could a training course teach the supervisors this sort of knowledge? Perhaps it would be about finding ways to stress how important it is and exploring ways in which they might do it.

Even though they identify the dominance of space by bigger boys playing football, the supervisors try to have a balanced view of the needs of children at different ages and skill level (Line 319). They think that younger/smaller/less skilled children want to be in the big boy's football team because of the status. My experience of playgrounds would lead me to concur with this view. I cannot

understand the level of interest and status that is attributed to being part of the football game. I cannot see why children cannot gain a similar level of status for being a part of another game or from being a sociable child, or skilled with the small play equipment. It's simply something that I cannot understand but appreciate that it is this way.

The supervisors are concerned that a small number of boys dominate the space by playing football and thereby restrict the choices that others have at lunchtime (Line 326). They also discuss the sameness of the football game and say it would make a nice change if they played something else. But playing is of course at the direction of children so, as they say in the interview, 'But why, if it's what they enjoy', (Line 335). Play is also about choice and a number of children are having their choices restricted. I am also concerned as to why the few that play football all of the time are locked into the expectations that they will do this every day. Perhaps they do need to consider alternatives. The supervisors think that football doesn't require the use of imagination or brains and neither does it encourage socialisation with a wider range of children (Line 339). When they compare with other activities they rather judgementally declare, 'What about those silly young boys though, all they do every day is run around and chase each other and try to wrestle to the ground. That's just the same a lot of the time', (Line 343). The supervisors clearly do not value running and wrestling and see it as silly and perhaps pointless. But in the first interview they said that part of the purpose of lunchtime was about running around and letting off steam.

What comes across is the routine nature of children's lunchtime play. The adults question the value of routines. I've no way of knowing if the children are entirely happy with the situation either or if it is a lunchtime culture that has evolved as a means of ascribing power and status, particularly to bigger boys. The football

playing may be a way that boys learn to socialise and solve problems and identify the hierarchy. The supervisors do not talk much about gender differences in play so I do not know what the girls are doing at this time and how they are forming a social hierarchy.

Line 395. 'Yeah I like to start with a quiet word. They do not lose face in front of their mates and you can sort of reason with them. Appeal to their better nature, cos they have one'. The supervisors understand that children are concerned with their image in front of others. They also have a balanced view of children.

Line 622. They say they've seen it all before and there is nothing new, implying that over the years the children are much the same. This could be interpreted as gloating.

The supervisors often talk about the needs of individual children and adapting their style of supervision to respond to such needs. If there is an incident between children they think that it is important to hear each child's view of the situation (Line 737). This also ensures that the incident doesn't carry over into class (Line 746). This was raised in the background literature, as teachers think that what happens at lunchtime can affect a child's learning in class through being distracted or upset.

They talk about leaving things to children to resolve issues as, 'Sometimes it's the adult intervention that causes the bigger problems', (Line 752). This is about trusting children and claiming that adults do not really understand the world of the child.

Line 770. 'They like to feel they're helping don't they?' How do the supervisors know that children like to help? Might it be that the supervisors give praise and

recognition for helping and it is this that the children like, rather than the helping. Are the supervisors creating a reality that helpful children gain adult approval, status and a sense of power and, 'helpful', is a valued trait? Similarly they think it is good for children to have responsibility (Line 772).

They have balanced views of children, observing that, 'You sometimes see a different side to some children', (Line 828). Here I do think that they share something unique with the children because teachers and parents have limited experiences of observing children in informal play situations with other children where the culture is different to the classroom and home.

They describe children as being, 'fly', (Line 887) by hiding what they might not have eaten at lunch but the supervisors know this about children and they know which ones are liable to hide food.

### **Assumptions about age**

The supervisors say, 'It's often the little ones that like a bit cuddle', (Line 135). They joke with the bigger ones when they are being silly and threaten to give them a cuddle. This is making it seem silly and a punishment almost for the bigger children to get a cuddle but maybe they need some physical contact just as much as the younger ones. I know there is an image issue and children seem to outwardly reject cuddles but I think that, provided it is done in the right way, they gain comfort from physical contact too. The adults are communicating their expectations about what children require as they mature and it seems that the children are going along with these expectations. Thus between them the supervisors and the children are creating a culture of lack of need for physical contact and a need for humour to cope when upset. Humour is also used as a form of managing silly behaviours. The supervisors do not differentiate between

boys and girls so I do not know if they feel differently about the gender of the older children.

Line 156. 'You have to be there for them, especially the little ones'. Why, 'especially'? Do the older children not need to have adults there for them just as much? The supervisors really do seem to have a view that younger children are needier.

They are of the view that juniors are likely to make a mess or get up to, '...goodness knows what', in the toilets if unsupervised (Line 671). I do not know what they are thinking of, or why the older children would be more inclined to get up to things than younger children. Is this another battle? Rules are a challenge and maybe so too are areas that are out of bounds.

They assume that older children do not need help with practical tasks such as opening packets (Line 875).

Older children apparently spoil activities that supervisors set up (Line 1013).

More than I had anticipated I feel that the supervisors have issues with the age of children.

## **Happy**

I want to give this a title all of its own because I think that we sometimes forget about children's happiness and was delighted that the supervisors simply stated that they are there for children to be happy at lunchtime. 'As long as they're happy. That's what we're here for', (Line 139).

Line 1222. 'The excitement they have for life, well sometimes'. For me this presents a picture of children excited and happy at lunchtimes and supervisors valuing these feelings that children have. I hope that this appreciation is

communicated to the children. Being happy and excited and all that this brings in terms of self-esteem and confidence, a sense of wonder and achievement and joy is what I would hope that school would foster.

### **Skills**

They recognise that they must be fair (Line 145). 'Mother to all, mother to none'.

Line 172. 'You have to be open-minded in this job, some of things that you hear. Yeah, it would be no good if you were easily offended'. A number of issues are raised with me in this exchange. Firstly the supervisors must in some way be entering the world of the children where the child/adult boundary is blurred. The supervisors accept this and I think that as children play there will be times when they say things that they perhaps did not intend for an adult to hear. However, why is it okay for the supervisors to feel that they mustn't be offended by some of the things that they hear? If an adult would be offended then I would think that whatever was said is probably unsuitable so shouldn't this be discussed with the children? It's very confusing. One moment the supervisor is the adult who looks you in the eye and tells you off. The next they act like a mother, then a teacher, and now they've heard a child say something that might offend. What are the children to make of this?

They imply that they take the time to stand back and reflect on what would be the best response to a situation (Line 150).

A persona is adopted to manage situations, 'Oh this poor old dear is tired can you keep it going for me', (Line 215). This is a subtle way of encouraging children to play independently without giving them a sense of rejection.

Being prepared to be flexible and try new things (Line 358).



Have to present a confident persona (Line 459).

In Interview 1 they talked about some of the skills and knowledge required for being an effective supervisor. Part of this was about being intuitive and this idea is introduced again. 'It's just sort of in you, isn't it?'. 'You've either got it or you haven't', (Line 469).

'It's knowing what to say and how and when that sometimes diffuses things', (Line 479). 'I think we do that without really thinking. We just sort of know when to', (Line 481).

Line 607. 'Well what we do seems to work'. At first I thought this seemed confident and bullish but then read on that they are open to trying new ideas and being flexible in relation to behaviour management. Also that what they do must work for them but also for the child (Line 611). What they are saying here is that managing behaviour is one thing, but doing it in a way that suits the child is important too. They have often made comments that recognise individual children and their individual differences and needs and I am heartened that with so many children in their care they are able to take account of individual needs.

They are able to reflect on their own actions and are prepared to take responsibility for this (Line 624). They appreciate that they sometimes get it wrong and are prepared to make amends (Line 633). I think this will help with relationships with children and provide them with a good model of behaviour.

In both Interview 1 and Interview 2 the supervisors were able to identify a wide range of individual and team skills that are required. This isn't reflected in the literature that I reviewed in preparing for this research. There was a lot about the 'lacks', though. I was a little surprised that the supervisors were so easily able to

identify their skills because when I have talked and worked with them they have seemed rather modest usually. I think they may have felt more comfortable doing it on this occasion because they were able to talk about their skills almost tangentially during the interviews.

### **Role of parent and role of teacher**

They call themselves, 'in-betweenies', (Line 155). They have to reflect on both the parent and the teacher role and judge how to respond to children and situations. I can see what they mean but does this leave them (and others) with a feeling that they do not have a distinct role, neither one thing nor the other?

Alternatively it might be because they are, 'in-betweenies', they are able to gain access to the lunchtime world of the children. More closely defining their role could restrict their opportunities to be, 'in-betweenies', with unique access to children's world.

It is suggested that in managing children's behaviour the supervisors use their personal parenting skills (Line 496) but another rightly points out that the lunchtime context is completely different so it must be more than parenting.

### **Conflicts**

Line 199. '...you have to be watching all of the time...'. '...sweep around with my eyes', (Line 199, 212). There is conflict though between trying to do this and at the same time play with the children. At the least they need to communicate to the children that they are there and are aware of what is going on. They are in control. Earlier I made a point about the tall order of things the supervisors have to do and be during the lunch hour. This must surely bring some conflict and I haven't yet established how they resolve this, or even if they do.

Earlier I said that I have an image of a battle field and there is a lot that the supervisors say that make me think it is like two armies pitting their wits against each other. On the other hand they talk a great deal about positive relationships with children, respect and about nurturing and caring for children. They want children to be happy. I'm not clear if these two images of battlefield and nurture conflict or complement.

### **Watching**

The visual language used in Interview 1 is used again. Line 217, '...you've got to watch for that'.

Line 301. 'We do need to see them though, it stops problems'.

Line 311. '...and we could keep an eye on things'.

Is being able to see everything that the children do linked to having a sense of control over them? Being 'in charge'.

Line 594. '...catch a few eyes'.

Line 603. 'I tend to stand and sort of watch, that seems to do the trick'.

In offering guidance to the buddies the supervisors suggest they, '...keep an eye...', (Line 764) and, '...see if they can help', (Line 765).

Line 801. 'You've got to be constantly watching.

Line 803. 'Eyes everywhere'.

Line 805. They introduce the concept of acceptable and, 'understandable noise levels', 'You've got a tuned ear as well. You pick up when something's not right, if they're too quiet, or if there's a particular squeal'. My view on this is that the

supervisors have an intuitive understanding of the lunchtime that develops with experience. They can see and hear things that mean something to them because they have an insider's knowledge of the children's lunchtime world.

Line 818. I think it is important too that the children realise the supervisors are insiders with an understanding as this maintains some order, 'I think they need to know, the kids, that we're looking at everything. It's no good being busy', (Line 818).

### **Reflecting and Consulting with each other**

When talking about the control of children using the junior toilet an alternative suggestion is made and a supervisor responds, 'I hadn't thought of that', (Line 312). This implies that they haven't had chance to talk about this issue and find an alternative solution. They present as a supportive team and they want to work together as a team but do not have opportunity to really develop as a team. If they did would it make them more assertive to challenge and make suggestions because they would be a more united group?

Although they are a reflective group they acknowledge that thinking is hard (Line 992). It is a skill and I think that having some means of facilitating this would be helpful for the supervisors. The supervisors end Interview 2 by talking about how they have found the experience of having time to think and talk enjoyable and helpful (Line 1237). Their engagement and their openness to listen to each other and reflect on their practice and their honesty has been a delight. It convinces me that they have much to offer, if only they were given the opportunity.

## **Specific issues**

The supervisors briefly mention specific issues of socialisation and friendship problems (Line 217) and potential for bullying in quiet corners (Line 224) and older children bullying younger children (Line 1027). This is a passing reference and comes across very much as something they are aware of but which does not form a large part of their daily duties.

They seem to be of the view that lunchtime behaviour is not a significant concern. This is contrary to some of the literature that I reviewed. Perhaps day by day in many schools things are okay at lunchtimes but some research tends to highlight the infrequent instances of poor or dangerous behaviour and colours perceptions that are formed about lunchtimes more generally. Difficulties in managing large numbers of children and the potential consequences of not doing this well could cause adults to be particularly anxious about poor lunchtime behaviour.

Quiet children are spoken of and the supervisors needing to be accessible to them also (Line 820).

Friendship problems and having nobody to play with is mentioned briefly (Line 994).

Line 1000. Football is viewed as, '...a bit of a problem, as usual', with bigger ones, '...hogging it'.

## **Control**

Line 459. 'Showing them who's boss'. Line 461, '...you being the top dog, or such like'.

'You can't show them a weakness. They sniff it out and they go for it', (Line 462).

Line 464. 'They do the same with the teachers'.

This all suggests a battle between children and supervisors and children and teachers that is almost animal like and predatory.

Line 654. 'Again it's letting your presence be felt'.

Moving around and surprising children means they need to be on their toes and think a bit more before they get into bother (Line 657).

Related to supervisors being in control they suggest they need to be because otherwise children would be, '...likely to get up to mischief', (Line 823). In Interview 1 however they suggested adults should trust children to make the right choices. It is possible that what they are saying is we should trust children to make the right choices about risky matters but that mischief is a normal part of childhood and is about testing boundaries, taking small risks and having fun. Certainly the background literature supports this view. Children may engage in risk taking behaviour to test situations and to learn from them. Further the background literature review argues that adults encourage children to direct their own play only if it fits with what adults regard as being socially acceptable.

Year 5 and 6 children are considered to think they are, 'top dogs' and, 'rule the roost', (Line 1015) but the supervisors claim that, '...it's us that rules the roost', (Line 1017). 'I suppose without them knowing it really we have to let them know that it's us that's in charge like', (Line 1020). The supervisors really need to have this sense of being in charge and they need others to know this too. It's as though the supervisors and the older children are vying to be the one in control. Perhaps it's because in the, 'pecking order', of the school system the supervisors

are simply one step up from the children, or this is how it seems to the children and to the supervisors. Again this was discussed in the background literature review in that games are an arena where opposition is expected to test and realign social identities.

The supervisors defend their right to be seen to be in charge by saying it's about being fair and ensuring that everybody has the right to , 'Be able to have a go at whatever they want', (Line 1025).

Although they are very keen to communicate that they are in charge they are limited as to what sanctions they can impose and this does not support the notion that they are in charge. 'I mean we're in charge so we should let the children know that we sort out problems', (Line 1123).

But there is uncertainty about who is in charge when teachers are around (Line 1190). I wonder if the teachers feel equally confused. The supervisors said earlier that the children are unclear.

### **Space and Ownership of space**

Space to play is a valued resource (Line 294. Line 315).

Although the children have space, the dominance of football by the bigger boys is commented on (Line 316). It is as though the bigger boys have ownership of the game and the space and can decide who is included and who isn't. How do the boys manage to get this level of power invested in them? Why do the adults seem to accept that that's the way it is? Does this reflect our society? The teachers own the staffroom. Who has ownership of the dining hall – the canteen staff? The corridors – the teachers? If I'd asked, would the supervisors have

been able to identify areas in school which they felt that they owned and had control over?

Space permits, 'bother', (Line 655) and makes supervision more difficult.

Moving around retains some ownership of the space. 'They know there's no little corners they can hide behind because we might just pop up there', (Line 660).

This is about control and behaviour management too.

### **Timing and organisation**

Children knowing the routines and things going smoothly at lunchtime are important to the supervisors. The length of time for lunchtimes is considered to be right. 'To be honest if they had longer outside I think they might get a bit bored. And cold' (Line 371). I am perplexed by this as children enjoying free time and not having to be inside and working would have struck me as being desirable but clearly not.

I wonder why they think the children would be bored. Is this because there are limited choices that the children can make at lunchtime or is it that the children can only amuse themselves for a limited period? Alternatively is it about the supervisors thinking they would be bored because they themselves wouldn't like lunchtimes to be longer? 'I couldn't cope with longer anyways', (Line 376).

However they do think that more time would allow them to try different activities with children which would distract them from falling out or fighting (Line 378).

There are contradictory messages being presented I think. The supervisors talk as though there are few behaviour problems but every now and then they say something which suggests that there are some behaviour problems. I do not know if this is because they want to imply there are no problems due to their



effective management or if the problems that occur do not dominate lunchtime experiences for children or for supervisors. Problems exist but they are not the primary focus of lunchtimes.

Knowing and following routines helps have an okay lunchtime (Line 929). I can understand the desire for routines with so many children to get through lunch and with so few adults supervising. Routines can give a sense of security. Sometimes routines can also give a sense of power to some. The person supervising the queue has the power to let the children eat lunch now or in a minute. It also bestows some status on the child at the front of the queue. The child at the front of the queue may be in a privileged position to overhear adult conversation or enjoy a chat with the adult themselves. Possibly being at the front of the queue gives wider menu selection and might also mean that the child gets outside to play that little bit sooner too. Routines give order, security and power. The supervisors talk often about the smoothness of the routines and are obviously very committed to them because of the benefits to organisation but perhaps it's about their security and power too.

### **Behaviour**

Line 399. 'If you shout and yell it doesn't get you anywhere'. In my experience shouting by supervisors has been raised as an issue yet they know it doesn't help. Also it can affect them, 'Aye, except your blood pressure goes through the roof', (Line 400).

Behaviour management is about respecting children and keeping the relationship positive (Line 401) and sounding as though you mean it and showing that you care about them (Line 422). Short talking sessions are more helpful than going on and on, 'That's when you see their eyes glaze over and you've lost them',

(Line 406). Personally I'd like teachers and other adults to realise this because I think we do have a tendency to talk over much at children.

The power of the audience is an issue and, associated with this, difficulties in managing a group of children, '...it gets out of hand', (Line 413). Although here the supervisors are talking about children's behaviour it does make me wonder about the power and influence of the audience and peers generally on play. It's about a group creating the lunchtime culture.

They are clear about rules and how they must be sensible and understood by children. They observe though that, 'Rules are for breaking aren't they?', (Line 427). This implies that children will challenge rules and adults expect them to break them. Is there something of a battle for power around rules?

Line 434. 'They didn't even enforce it after the first couple of days'. I presume that, 'they', refers to teachers. So who owns these rules and who has responsibility for enforcing them? It's almost as though the supervisors take some pleasure in children challenging arbitrary rules that have been set by teachers.

There is a lack of confidence in dealing with incidents (Line 443). Usual strategies of talking and distraction may not work in certain situations, such as a fight (Line 449) and with certain individuals. 'It's the ones that look you right in the eye and there's no fear in them', (Line 453). Should the children have a sense of fear? 'They wouldn't dare', (Line 489). 'I don't get any cheek now. Nobody sets cheek to me', (Line 536). It's about a challenge between children and supervisor and the supervisor is proud that children do not challenge. What would happen if they did, 'dare', or, 'set cheek'? Surely the children know there isn't much that could happen to them. The children may have established that

they do not behave in a certain way with certain supervisors. I wonder what it is about those supervisors that makes them not, 'dare', or, 'set cheek'. Is this the inner confidence that the supervisors talk of? Is this also about the children and supervisors coming to some agreement that it is understood they behave in a particular way for some supervisors but not others? 'I guess the kids know where they stand with you. You've never taken any nonsense off them', (Line 492).

They seem to want training on safe physical intervention and worry about accusations made against them (Line 473). I assume then there are enough times when they have to physically intervene to warrant a request for training. This surprises me as until now there has not been a lot of suggestion that behaviour at lunchtimes and the management of this is such an issue. Are they becoming more relaxed and open and starting to reveal more of what goes on or are they simply making suggestions for training that might be useful. I really do not know.

Line 485. They discuss a group who hang around the bushes, 'I just get a mouthful or they ignore me but they don't with her'. Children behave differently with different supervisors. At least the supervisors can talk about this, which is very honest and supportive.

Potential for bullying is remarked on (Line 660).

Children engage in tale telling (Line 705).

Line 751. 'Most of what goes on between children is minor stuff, and they can resolve things very easily'.

They say they want children to get on and play cooperatively, 'Most of them do really most of the time', (Line 939). So this suggests that behaviour isn't a

significant issue for large chunks of time. I suppose that if in a day there has been one argument to sort out this would colour perceptions of the day. It's hard to get a perspective as to what is going on but I know from the observation that I did the general behaviour seemed to be acceptable.

Supervising the junior toilet door takes time and the supervisors have identified that the children make a game of challenging this by trying to get in. Could it be that this is something the children and supervisors share an understanding about? Is it usual for children to try to challenge something about the school system and that unintentionally setting up minor situations that challenge is a way of controlling this urge that children have to challenge? What I mean is that if children spend their time having fun and gaining a sense of achievement for having beaten the supervisor by getting in to the toilet it means they haven't gained the same pleasure from challenging something that has the potential to be more serious.

### **Shared understanding**

Line 444. 'Sometimes I think you know something is going to blow...'. The supervisors can read the situation.

Line 589. 'I know that group right, and you can tell, they've got a look, or a way of walking and you know they may be about to start something'.

Line 593. Making yourself known and being a presence is a way of dealing with potential incidents. This strikes me as the children and supervisors reading each other and knowing what each is about without necessarily having to say anything.

Sometimes that have to explicitly say to the children though, 'I know what you're planning so don't even think about it', (Line 617). They are clearly communicating to the children that they have an understanding of their childhood lunchtime world.

Line 620. 'They think they know us but we can read them like books'. Line 987, 'They read us like books'.

I'm not sure what to make of the statement, 'We got on with our jobs and the children got on with what they do', (Line 926). It's as though they exist in parallel, each doing their own thing. But, this isn't what is suggested by so much of what the supervisors have said at other times. They have talked about the shared nature of lunchtimes and about them being facilitators. Perhaps this was a simple turn of phrase that doesn't mean anything. It may be that in developing a shared understanding the children can get on with what they want to do within the agreed unspoken parameters. This is a problem with analysing the interviews as there is a tendency to try to read something into everything that is said but we do at times all offer flippant remarks that have no underlying meaning. I might also neglect to analyse other statements where there is a deeper meaning and this worries me.

Line 934. 'They know what we want'. This is explicitly saying that the children know the supervisors' agenda. When asked how they reply, 'They just do', (Line 943). They say they remind them but it's interesting that the supervisors think there is a shared understanding between them and children.

When questioned further about this they find it hard to say how the children know what the supervisors want of them and of the lunchtime. It's unspoken agreements and some of it is about children seeing what goes on and learning

from this (Line 960). Some of it is about reading the non-verbal cues from adults (Line 976). They even suggest, 'Some must be born knowing it', (Line 952).

However it happens the supervisors are clear that children have an understanding of what supervisors want and they imply that the children fulfil this to some extent. So not only do the supervisors have an understanding of the children's lunchtime agenda but the children also have an understanding of the supervisors' agenda. The two agendas must have some coherency otherwise the lunchtime would be a scene of conflict. There must be some compromise too. What I find interesting is that there isn't explicit discussion of this and agreement as to which parts the adults will compromise over and which parts the children will. I assume it is something that evolves over time. This requires, I think, open and flexible adults who are sensitive to the needs of children. With such a relaxed approach to the appointment of supervisors and a lack of on-going appraisal, it must be sheer luck that it works out reasonably well.

The problem lunchtimes that are discussed in some of the literature might occur partly because of conflict between the two different agendas and an unwillingness to be flexible. It might also be about having a dispirit group of supervisors that do not have a shared understanding of the lunchtime agenda and that do not have the qualities of a, 'team', to explore this in a trusting and supportive way. This is making me think that schools should give much more careful consideration to the selection procedures and on-going professional development to create a more cohesive team of supervisors.

Further, it might also be about teachers and supervisors not having a shared understanding of what lunchtimes are about and the what the role of the supervisors is (Line 1233).

## Training

My experience with supervisors has been that they are eager to learn. In the background literature I highlighted concerns about supervision at lunchtimes and how some pieces of research and certain national initiatives (such as SEAL, 2003) promote some form of training to address issues such as the self-esteem of supervisors and reflecting on the purpose of lunchtimes.

Supervisors in this study don't think that training would help. They learn from each other and this needs to be an on-going process. 'Learning with Nanny. Nelly', (Line 518). The supervisors really believe that you have to have done the job to understand the demands before you could train them. It is certainly a demanding job but are they right that you have to really understand the nuts and bolts of their job before you could offer training? I think this might be tied in with feeling unappreciated and ignored in the school system. They present as victims almost. Nobody understands their role but they are taken advantage of. Equally though they may not understand what it is like for teachers.

Having been involved in a considerable training with supervisors the comments these supervisors are making have encouraged me to reflect on the style of training that I have offered. If I was to consider training now I would do much more observation and finding out what the strengths of the team and the individuals were. I would explore how they could support each other. I would also try to explore how communication might be improved. I don't know that I would need necessarily to do the job but I would observe and consult with them to get more of an idea as to what it is like for the supervisors in individual schools. This has largely been the form of training that I have developed so it feels good to have this vindicated.

### **Impact on how children develop into adults**

As with being happy at lunchtime I was taken with the supervisors saying, 'Well that's right, you need to think about what you're doing don't you? Especially as it's children we're dealing with and if we get it wrong with them when they're so young it could have some impact on what they turn out like', (Line 646). In a way this touches on my interest in this research. I am interested in the impact that supervisors can have on children's lunchtime experiences. In making this statement the supervisors are saying it isn't just about the experience at that moment in time but how this shapes how they develop into an adult. They worry about getting it right. The background literature suggests that lunchtime play is about enjoying and coping with the present and preparing for the future but it doesn't single out the extent that supervisors are involved in this or how they are concerned with getting it right.

### **Involving supervisors**

They seem proud of the buddy system and explain that it was a joint effort between them and a teacher. 'We instigated this. We got it off the ground. With a teacher. We sort of organised it together', (Line 759).

The School Council were involved but they do not know how (Line 761). It's disappointing that an initiative which they feel a sense of responsibility for has elements that they aren't involved in. Although they do not comment on it I think that their involvement with the School Council could be beneficial.

They believe that their involvement in lunchtime initiatives is crucial to success.

They say that they explain things to children too (Line 776). 'You're right.

Sometimes it's when people don't tell us, or ask us, that's the problem', (Line



780). Perhaps the crucial factor is having the supervisors on board with an idea and without their support and encouragement an initiative may not be as successful. Thinking back to the literature it is suggested that supervisors should be involved and this seems to be confirmed in this interview. They say that they are there, every day and they have insider knowledge about lunchtimes (Line 782).

Informing and consulting with supervisors, even about information they need to have, is inconsistent. 'Hit and miss really. Some teachers will tell us things and some won't', (Line 906). The supervisors talk about needing to know about children's diets, behaviour, learning and home circumstances. They know though that confidentiality is important.

The supervisors believe that they have a unique relationship with children. They spend time with them every day and they are committed to considering the needs of individual children. They believe that part of their role is about the children enjoying the present and preparing for the future. From this perspective I can understand why they would like to be informed about significant issues related to individual children and for there to be a system in place to ensure consistency. I do not know if they have tried to challenge this and if not why not, if they feel they can only do their job properly with such information.

### **Purpose of lunchtime**

Line 854. 'They need to get out though don't they? To get rid of that energy'. If children are indoors due to wet play they are likened to, '...wild animals that's been caged', (Line 859). If they haven't been able get out their afternoon can be a, 'nightmare', (Line 856). This again suggests that what happens at lunchtime can impact on children's time in class afterwards.

## **Time for thinking**

I do think that the supervisors are reflective practitioners but time for this is limited, 'Well I've never thought of it before now. I'm only thinking now cos we're chatting'. (Line 864). If they had dedicated time to review their practice and lunchtime issues they would be able to engage more purposefully in reflection and solution focussed thinking.

## **Conflict with Teachers**

I've called this conflict but I do not know if this is right. Is it about disappointment, or their perception of teachers, or something else? Certainly the supervisors have some issues about teachers.

Earlier I said that the supervisors mocked the teachers. The first improvement to lunchtimes that they suggest when specifically asked would be teachers coming out just before the whistle is blown (Line 1033). I think they are very aware of what they see as the shortcomings of teachers and the lack of support they perceive from teachers.

There is confusion at the line waiting to go in about who is in charge – the supervisor or the teacher (Line 1042). The children are confused about this too. Improved communication and better relationships would resolve this because they manage it well between themselves.

Poor communication is identified as a barrier to them being able to do their job well (Line 1078). They claim to have tried to speak up but say that, 'Well we've tried talking to the Head but she doesn't have the time or makes promises but nothing happens', (Line 1095). Lunchtimes and meeting with the supervisors is not a priority for the Head, they think, but they think it should be. Given the

potential for difficulties at lunchtime and the possible spill over into lessons I would have to agree with them. Ultimately the Head has responsibility for children at lunchtime which she has merely delegated to the supervisors.

Line 1190. 'Actually it bothers me when teachers come out and I do sometimes cringe when things happen...'. The supervisors feel that teachers judge them, or that they want to be seen to do a good job, or they want to impress, or not disappoint teachers.

### **Rewards and sanctions**

Having discussed this in the first interview the supervisors realise they would like to be involved in rewarding children and would like to give out special assembly mentions (Line 1047).

Line 1051. 'I think we should be able to take action as well'. This refers to resolving minor issues themselves rather than going through the Head.

Line 1127. In my view they rightly observe that sending a child in is often not a punishment and they are frustrated that nothing seems to happen. The child is warm and gets attention from the secretary so it is positive attention and a reward for poor behaviour. This must undermine the supervisors' actions. This is something that they might challenge with increased confidence.

### **Assertiveness and appreciating what they are capable of**

Although linked, I think, with their status and relationship with teachers I want to highlight how towards the end of the second interview the supervisors make statements that recognise the need to be more assertive. It is as though being involved in the interviews has been something of a journey for them. The journey has taken them along a path that has permitted them to value what they do and

the ideas that they have. They have said out loud things that they had previously done without thinking or talking about. They acknowledge that they get paid to do the job (Line 1137) and that they are adults (Line 1137). In talking about being more assertive they describe it rather like a battle plan, 'We maybe need to get her sat down and get her to listen to us', (Line 1143). 'Not just the Head but the teachers as well', (Line 1145). 'We need, us supervisors, we need to get together to decide what we want first. A united front so to speak' (Line 1146). It is as though they are going to have to be quite forceful to ensure they are heard. It has taken being involved in interviews for them to realise that they, '...could have it better' (Line 1162).

### **General thoughts**

I have ideas milling around my head that aren't properly formed but I do not want to lose. There are assumptions made about supervisors in terms of their capabilities and relying on a common sense approach to the supervision of large numbers of children in a relatively unstructured situation in a context where the opportunities for learning through play and being happy are tremendous. Is it good enough to make such assumptions?

Also there is a lot of confusion about the precise nature of their role. It's as though in the absence of clear guidance and regular review they are stumbling around, sometimes being like a teacher, sometimes being like a parent but really neither one thing nor another. However, they aren't complaining about lots of difficulties so this must work to some extent. There are tensions surrounding the sharing of some lunchtime experiences with children because they aren't children, they are supervising adults and I do not know if this blurs boundaries. Maybe not, maybe the children and the supervisors have an unspoken

understanding about how those boundaries operate, which is different to the boundaries they have with teachers. Perhaps this is the very special nature of the relationship that forms between children and supervisors during lunchtime.

I am also developing an idea that the supervisors want to have control over lunchtime but because they do not have a sense of ownership this is hard for them. They need to be given permission and to be told that the lunchtime is their domain within certain parameters set out in a job description and through collaborative consultation with school staff.

I'm confused about the issue of children's behaviour at lunchtimes. I think they have suggested there are some issues over children being rude to them, children falling out with each other and occasional physical contact (which may or may not be a, 'fight'). None of this seemed to be a significant issue however and there was much about lunchtime that was so positive. Then later in Interview 2 they seem to imply that actually some children are particularly rude towards some supervisors and that possibly there is more physical aggression than I had previously detected. As I continue to read Interview 2 I began to feel that generally the behaviour of children at lunchtime is of concern. I do not know though if this is because we were talking about it and therefore highlighting some of the issues and not presenting a balanced view. I am interested to see what the analysis of the interviews looks like when I try to cluster the post-its and refer back to the interviews and this diary. Sometimes I get so immersed in reading the interviews and thinking about what is said that, 'I cannot see the wood for the trees'. A break is needed, often.

I think the supervisors so want to do a good job by the children and they reflect on this a lot. They firmly believe that they and lunchtimes at school can have a

significant impact on children's experiences as children but also on how they develop into adults. They worry though about fitting in all of the routines and organisational things they have to do. They feel unsupported and unappreciated by the wider school system. It's a struggle for them and I do not know if they might feel frustrated because they think they could do a better job and be more of a positive influence if only they had the time and support.

As an aside I've been reading in the interview about how the supervisors consider opportunity to play as a, 'need', for children. It is ironic that the very same morning a letter comes from the school that one of my children attends.

*'Our central purpose is preparing young people for life. We are determined to deliver excellent personalised education and development for every child. We are looking at longer learning slots to optimise student learning. To achieve this we are considering shorter lunchtimes'.*

This suggests such a lack of understanding as to what the purpose of the lunchtime is and what children need. I feel so frustrated. When thinking about learning and children's development the school think that lunchtime has nothing to offer.

I have reached the stage now where I think that I have analysed the interviews but I know that I as move onto the next stage of clustering the post-its I will probably make further analytical observations and decisions. I know that I have to be careful to keep true to what the supervisors said. It would be easy to analyse so much that the outcome would be adrift of what was said or what the intended meaning was. Equally I know that because I am cautious of this I need to check that what I have done is analysis and not merely description. Qualitative

analysis takes so much time and this has really taken me unawares. I can spend whole days on just a few pages of interview text.

Just to prove how topical this is I have just had a break and watched ITV's, 'Loose Women'. Part of their discussion was the changes in society and how children's play is now restricted.

So, onto the next stage. Clustering the post-its.

### **Reflective Diary Part 3: Clustering Post-its**

#### **Sorting into broad groups**

When I analysed Interview 1 and Interview 2 I wrote broad theme headings or phrases in the right-sided margins and put these to one side. There were therefore a great many of these in a pile. I stuck long strips of wallpaper to walls and, taking each post-it one at a time, I simply put the post-its onto the walls in broad clusters. I had for instance a group of post-its which seemed to be saying something about assumptions that supervisors make about children, another that was about knowing children and another about communication. I did this without thinking too much and made quick intuitive decisions. I took a photograph of this which I may use in the appendix as evidence of the process.

#### **Naming broad groups and re-sorting**

Once all of the post-its had been placed on the walls I looked at them a little more carefully and tried to find a word or short phrase that captured the essence of a group of post-its and I wrote these on to blank paper, which I then laid on the floor. With a little more thought I took grouped post-its off the wall and laid them on a paper, on what I thought were the most appropriate headings. As I did this I realised that the broad headings needed to be broken down more, for instance

the broad theme of, 'Taking the job of a supervisor', began to conceptually separate into, 'reasons for being offered it', 'reasons for taking it', 'motivation for keeping it'.

What I noticed when I was doing this was how different the clusters looked from when I was analysing the interviews and writing notes in this diary. Also I found that alternative ideas would strike me. I think this is about seeing everything together and physically moving the post-its. It is the multi-sensory aspect of the analysis which brings a different level to it all. This confirms for me that it was right not to do the colour coding but to have much more physical interaction with the data. For instance looking at the post-its at this stage made me realise just how much they said about acting a persona as a supervisor. I was aware of this and have a heading for this in the diary but seeing the post-its and handling them makes this a more powerful theme. 'Acting a persona', may be important to the supervisors because they believe that children, 'read them like a book', and they have to be mindful to act as though they are confident and in control. This then ties in with the need to feel that they are, 'in charge', and that others should realise this too. Similarly the supervisors talked about what they saw as their role, which included practical duties. Having a lot of practical duties to perform is something that comes across in the literature. However, by standing back and looking at what the supervisors said this is only a small part of their story. Actually they are much more concerned with the nurturing aspect of their role. Again the dominance of this as a theme did not really strike me when I was doing the initial analysis it's only now seeing and handling the post-its that it does.



## **Grounding (interviews)**

I am keen to make sure that the analysis is grounded in what was said but also grounded in how I have interpreted the interviews as detailed in this diary. So I checked the interviews again and trawled through, re-reading the transcript and looking at the margin notes to see if there was anything that had not been captured on the post-its or in the group names. What I found was that I felt I needed to write some additional post-its to capture ideas that were perhaps not as clear from the existing sets.

I did this because there were parts of the supervisors' story that I felt weren't adequately reflected through the post-its and the sorting and grouping process. The supervisors talk about children needing to let off steam, being like caged animals if they do not get out and needing a break from the pressure of learning. I imagine children being like pressure cookers that need a release of pressure to calm. The supervisors say that children get this release by being outside and having freedom. I think the supervisors' views on this are significant as freedom and choice are characteristics of play identified in the background literature.

The idea that they are, 'in-betweenies', neither a parent or a teacher is significant I think. I'm not sure if this is a problem. Perhaps they are not sure what they are, what they need to be or what they need to do. This something that I need to think about a little more.

The joy of children and the joy of children's play is a strongly positive theme that they talk about. There is a pride in how well they do their job. They present a generally positive lunchtime experience with a balanced view that some days are better than others.

I was a little surprised how much they express assumptions about the age of children, more so than gender.

They do not describe as many behaviour problems as I might have expected.

They say that just one incident can taint the day.

There are a number of battle and army references (for instance battlefield of playground, military exercise and being one step ahead).

Knowing and seeing children is vital to supervisors.

In talking about the shared lunchtime world the supervisors feel privileged to be a part of the child's world and try to respect this and avoid exploiting it.

They are resigned to feeling put upon and unappreciated. They want to be left to get on with their job but feel powerless to change anything or be in control. There is a sense of dejection because they feel they have tried to consult and to change but it has been fruitless.

Gut feelings and learning intuitively from experience is a strong theme.

There is some inconsistency. For instance they talk a lot about teachers which I have interpreted to reflect conflict. However they also claim that teachers are approachable and they feel part of the school. They say if given the opportunity of a miracle they wouldn't change anything. Yet they had identified issues over time pressure, confusion over the precise nature of their role and conflict with teachers. I am surprised they wouldn't like some of this to change.

The, 'team', is a particularly strong part of the supervisors' story. What I am not clear about is why this is so strong. This may be due to feeling they have to rely on each other because there isn't anybody else. It may be due to having a

shared vision. Binding together as a team may support their individual self-esteem.

They offer an insightful view into the likely success of change which depends on involving others and setting things up properly.

These ideas, and others, are things that I need to think about more and will hopefully be addressed in the discussion. I may even write more in this diary to help me to clarify my thoughts.

### **Grounding (diary)**

I noticed some anomalies between the diary headings that had been written on the post-its and the interview transcript headings. For instance 'Happy' was a post-it heading from the diary that had not been listed in the right sided margin of the interview transcripts. Children being happy was explicitly but only briefly mentioned. However, I felt that the way this was talked about explicitly and alluded to during the interviews warranted being included in the sorting and clustering process. There was also a heading about the lunchtime world being closed to the researcher and although I included this as a post-it for sorting I do not think that it was a significant idea that the supervisors talked about when sharing their story. Certainly they think that the lunchtime world is closed to parents and teachers and this is a significant feature of their story.

I took a photograph of the papers on the floor and I also photocopied them, but I'm not sure if I will use them.

### **Clustering**

At this stage I had pieces of paper all over the floor with post-its on them. I looked again and began to cluster them together. This was so hard though. I

could easily have had 'Conflict' as a major cluster with lots of subordinate clusters related to conflict. There seems to be so much conflict. For instance I had conflict with, amongst others, teachers, conflict between watching and doing, conflict caused by time and conflict with the Head. I have to be honest here too. Part of me worried about declaring lunchtime to be a mass of conflict of one form or another. I know if this is the experience of supervisors then this is what I need to present. However I want to look beneath this a little bit more and explore what might be underlying the conflict. This could be a lack of clear guidance on what their role entails. Because of this the supervisors may be inclined to seek security in routines and good organisation, which may in turn put pressure on them because there is so little time to get through everything. It's as though one conflict feeds another.

This clustering took some time and repeated attempts. I would do it, then leave it for a day and come back to re-consider. I found this made me more open to new insights. I also found that I would come back to the clusters and ask questions. Does it make sense for those to be clustered together? What is it that cluster saying? Does that cluster convey what the supervisors talked about? Does it reflect my interpretation of what was said? For example I clustered together group headings of 'lonely team', 'unappreciated', 'needing to be needed' and 'expectations of their role'. I was not sure if feeling unappreciated was more to do with the self-esteem of the supervisors than being unsure of what their job entailed. What I did not have together was, 'ownership and a need to be in charge', with, 'routines'. On the second clustering I thought that adhering to routines may be about a control issue or it may be about being unclear about their role so they were clinging to routines for a sense of security. Thus at the second stage I was not yet sure which cluster routines would best fit with.

At a later stage a cluster of Communication included relationships with the Head. However, when I reviewed this I did not think that the supervisors had been telling me that because of poor communication their relationship with the Head was poor. I was finding therefore that whilst clustering seemed to make sense at the time of doing it I really did need to repeat this process and question what I was doing much more.

Ultimately I have to reach the point where I realise, 'that's enough'. I need to avoid 'theoretical saturation', when additional analysis no longer contributes to discovering anything new. I'm not there yet though because when I go back to clustering I realise that I've put something where it doesn't seem to make sense. The clustering continues. I have taken a few photographs to show some of the different cluster attempts. I may not use these but just wanted to have them in case evidence was needed.

When I cluster a group together I am finding it helpful to read what is on the post-its too. It may be that the group name that I assigned doesn't quite fit what that group of post-its are really saying. Or it may be that one of two of the post-its that I have assigned to that group now do not seem to fit. For instance I had, 'behaviours', as a group. At an early stage I had this as a conflict. When I looked at this again and referred back to the interview transcripts and the diary I realised that the supervisors were saying those things had to be managed. They were also saying though that much of the behaviour was within the bounds of what they considered to constitute a, 'normal', part of behaviour and was related to children achieving a sense of self and independence. Some of the behaviour post-its though were about individuals challenging the systems a little more so I moved this to a group saying something about challenging the ownership of

lunchtimes and also to another group about assumptions that supervisors make about children.

I do find that some things could easily be placed in more than one cluster. For example the supervisors talked of football dominating the space so I put this in a cluster about things that need to be overcome for the supervisors to achieve a sense of ownership of the lunchtime. However, when I re-read the interviews they were talking about children using football as a means of developing their identity and relating with each other. So football was put into both clusters (challenges and autonomy and agency). I think this reflects that the supervisors are part of an interacting system which is something that I discussed in the literature review.

In the middle of all of this I have realised that I have subsumed, 'communication', into clusters. For instance at one stage I had a cluster that was about respect and relationships that included communication. At another stage it was in a cluster about self-esteem. As I have re-visited the interviews and diary I am realising that this doesn't do this issue justice. Communication was actually a very significant issue for them generally. I think that it warrants being a cluster in its own right.

Theme names for the clusters seem to have come quite naturally and are really common-sense.

As I am getting closer to a final list of themes I have tried to map it out. My IT skills really let me down though. That and the IT software that I have. I have tried so many times to map out models only to find that I cannot move boxes of text where I want them or the map looks too busy, or graphics move around when I add additional text. This is so frustrating and it's interfering with my thinking.

I have decided to type out each theme, cut them up and then lay them on the floor. It's what I did with the post-its, this manual sorting, and it worked well for that. I need to handle the data and see it. Then, when I think I've got there, I will try to master the IT.

I've got to be careful because I am trying to tidy it all up by putting structures and additional headings in the clusters. I know that what I've just spent a couple of hours doing may look nice but it has moved away from what the supervisors said. It could be so easy to do that so I have to keep looking back at the interviews and this diary and checking the post-its too. I have for instance begun to think that the clusters are not really reflecting the sense that the supervisors were giving permission (i.e. we let them). Also I have immersed the notion of, 'power', into the clusters but perhaps it needs to be a cluster on its own, or more clearly combined with another. 'Needing to be needed', is now in with self-esteem but again I think it was a more prominent feature of the supervisors' story such that a separate cluster would be warranted. Finally there is the issue of collusion, created by being an, 'in-betweenie', and sharing the world of the child. I need to go back though and check is this is really what the supervisors described.

After much moving of bits of paper I am getting to what seems almost there. I will return yet again to the data to check. First stage of checking was to look at the group names and see if each of those is covered by a theme name. Then, look at all of the individual post-its and check that they are covered by the themes. Then look at the Reflective Diary. Returning then to the interview transcripts to check with the left and right margin notes and the interviews themselves. It's a sort of forward and backward chaining exercise. I know I am being thorough and

this is taking a lot of time but I am concerned with remaining true to the story that the supervisors shared with me. I think it will be worth it in the end.

It's a salutary lesson really to check back as I did. I did think that there were parts of the supervisors' story that weren't adequately reflected in the clusters, or were in the wrong cluster, or should be in more than one cluster. For instance the supervisors made assumptions about children wanting to help and this directs some of their interactions with the children. This was not clear in the clusters that I had. Similarly, 'routines', is clearly in the clusters but not, 'rota', which was a significant part of their story as, I think, this was something that had been within their control. Other elements of the story that I thought weren't adequately reflected in the existing clusters was the supervisors' openness to change and consider new ideas, their belief that they are role models to the children. the, 'unique', relationship they have with children, the strong team identity, their willingness to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, and work around these, their perception of the playground 'battlefield' and the they / us divide between them and teaching staff.

Although teachers and the Head Teacher were listed as subordinate themes in the clusters I did not think that this really communicated what the issues were. When I re-considered the data the supervisors' story was about consultation, collaboration, communication and understanding each other's role.

Furthermore I felt that I should rename some of the other themes to make it a little clearer as to what the supervisors were communicating in their story. For example, 'communication systems' in the 'Communication' theme is actually about there being inconsistent systems.



Life has taken over again so I have had a short break (two weeks) from the research. Also, I realised that I was getting bogged down again and need to refresh myself and my thinking.

Quite by chance a thought struck me today. I have been pulling together all of these interesting themes, one of which is about children's autonomy and agency. I've realised that quite simply this is what the lunchtimes are about for the supervisors too. If I am using IPA to understand their experiences and how they make sense of their experiences I need to be clear with myself that this isn't just about what is going on for the children and the tensions etc. The main thing I think (at the moment at least) is that lunchtimes are about how they feel about themselves and their autonomy and agency – this is what is underpinning their experiences of lunchtime. So we have a group of adults trying to find their way around their own autonomy and agency whilst at the same time trying to facilitate children developing their autonomy and agency. Is this possible I have to ask myself? Or do the supervisors have a shared experience with the children about how it feels to have limited autonomy and agency and therefore the empathy is a positive feature and strength. It goes around in circles in my head. What if the supervisors cannot really facilitate the children's autonomy and agency because they themselves haven't achieved it – where does this leave the children's experiences and what are they really gaining from the lunchtime? I need to think about all of this a little more.

I am busy writing the results and discussion section. This is a fascinating process. I thought that I had identified the main themes and the sub themes. I have checked, and re-checked the interviews and this diary. I have checked that the themes are grounded in what was actually said. Then when I am writing up the results and use those themes and sub themes as headings I come to realise

that actually there are some that cannot easily be supported by quotes from the interviews. For example in the Learning theme I have put a sub theme of 'Support for teachers' but when I refer back to the interviews and the diary the supervisors do not really talk about their role in supporting the role of teachers in relation to children's learning. They do think they have a part to play in children's learning, but they do not say this is about them supporting the teachers. It's a subtle difference but important I think. It says their priorities are about the children directly.

Realising that sub themes may not be easily supported by quotes doesn't necessarily mean that I've got it wrong because the sub themes may well come from my own interpretation. It does mean though that I need to re-check and be very careful about the results that I am presenting to be sure they reflect the supervisors' story and my interpretation is grounded in the interviews.

I am finding that some of the sub themes are so closely connected that they can be compacted a little more. For example in Autonomy and Agency I have separate sub themes of 'happy', 'emotional resilience and confidence' and 'self-esteem' but I think that in the interview these are actually talked about in the same way so I will merge them together.

I also find that where I have included some sub themes in a number of main themes this actually makes the writing up more difficult so I need to make a decision about where each sub theme best fits and then perhaps refer to it briefly when writing about other themes. Having done the analysis I thought the writing up would be easier but it has surprised me how the analysis is actually continuing and the writing up is as challenging and as time consuming as the analysis itself.

As I have been writing up the account of the supervisors' story I initially found that things were literally all over the place, for instance I was working with 11 themes, a number with 15 or so sub themes. Information was duplicated and actually it did not make sense. There was not a coherency in what I was doing. I stepped back from it all again and tried to think about what it was those themes were actually 'saying'. It came back to the idea of the supervisors wanting to be independent and in control of lunchtimes. It was about their self-esteem and their status. It was also about how the supervisors felt lunchtimes were about the children playing and learning to be independent, now and in the future. This of course is about autonomy and agency for both. Then the structure started to make sense. The analysis and the Reflective Diary had identified factors that provided a conflict to autonomy and agency and factors that reinforced them. There are actually two main themes of supervisors autonomy and agency and children's autonomy and agency and each of these have challenges or reinforces (need to think of a better word). Each challenge and reinforcement has a number of factors. When I look at it like this the writing up more naturally falls into certain sections - not all of it and there are still some overlaps and contradictions but this is okay and it is making more sense.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Background on the School in the Preliminary Study (School A)**

In preparing for the main study an initial study was undertaken to refine the selected methods. This preliminary study also provided an opportunity to reflect on how a semi-structured focus group interview would facilitate supervisors in telling their lunchtime story.

The details of this study are provided here.

#### **Aims**

The aims of this study were to provide opportunity to practice the interview technique, have some notion of the likely time required, and to become familiar with the recording of interviews. I was also interested in receiving feedback from the supervisors about how they had found the process. I wished to know if the group interview allowed them to talk about what they wanted to i.e. did it allow them to share their story. Due to my previous experience of conducting lunchtime observations at schools I did not observe at lunchtime as part of this preliminary study.

At this stage the intention was not to analyse the interview.

#### **Information on School A**

The initial study was conducted in Carlisle, North Cumbria. It was at mainstream state school for girls and boys aged from 3 to 11. There were between 150-170 pupils on roll. The school's catchment area is socio-economically well below

average, which is reflected in the fact that more than half the pupils are eligible for free school meals. More than a third of pupils have special educational needs mainly related to their learning and/or social and emotional difficulties. Almost all the pupils are White British. The 2006 Ofsted report considered it to be a satisfactory, but improving school.

### **Implementation of Preliminary Study**

The school was one that I was familiar with. I had previously worked with the four supervisors on a lunchtime project. I had developed a good rapport with them as a consequence. This rapport was considered to be important as their views on the interview process would be sought. Also there was an acceptance that this initial study was specifically arranged to benefit me as a researcher and might not necessarily be of benefit to the school or to the supervisors.

I prepared some questions that might be posed during the interview. These were based on my previous experience of working with supervisors. The aim was not to have all questions answered, but rather to gain an impression on whether such prompts might usefully engage the supervisors. It also meant that I could make judgments about how relevant such questions seemed to be to the supervisors.

Having gained consent, I met with the supervisors as a group to conduct the semi-structured interview. Handwritten notes were taken during the interview to record subjective comments about the interview process and the responses of the supervisors to the questions. Other general comments made by supervisors were similarly written down. At the end of the interview (and following a comfort break) I chatted informally with the supervisors and asked them to reflect on their

experiences of the interview. I asked for their advice about how it could have been improved.

From conducting this preliminary study important considerations were raised, which would inform the way in which the main study was conducted. These included primarily:

### **Informing the Main Study**

#### **Timing**

I found the interview might take between an hour and an hour and a half. I realised that I needed to make a judgment as to when the interview had come to a natural conclusion.

#### **Comfort**

Having a suitable room and refreshments made the interview context more conducive to conversation.

#### **The value of building rapport**

Rapport, power and self-esteem issues are considered to be potentially significant issues in this research and for lunchtime supervisors more generally. In this preliminary study the supervisors were already familiar with each other and with me. Rapport was therefore easily established. However, I did not take such matters for granted and tried to ensure that during the interview emphasis was very much on what the supervisors wanted to say. My role was facilitator. Following the interview the supervisors were asked directly about my manner, and how this might be changed to allow other supervisors to feel at ease. The supervisors confirmed that I seemed genuinely interested, was friendly and

sociable. They observed that there was no jargon used, which was appreciated. They did not feel that there was something in particular that I was hoping they would talk about. This permitted them opportunity to talk about what they were interested in. The supervisors said that they were comfortable chatting in the interview. They did not feel judged and were confident that confidentiality would be observed. The supervisors said they were aware however that I would help them to remain focussed. They were confident I would ensure that everybody had opportunity to share their views and would manage the time. The feedback was therefore positive. This encouraged my confidence in working in this way with other supervisors.

#### Establishing protocols and the need to manage the interview

Various interview protocols and boundaries were agreed before the interview began (such as confidentiality, mutual respect, finishing on time, etc). I also made it clear that the views of everybody were of interest. Sensitive management was used to curtail some of the discussion, to manage a more dominant member and to encourage everybody to speak. I felt that this was managed well, and did not interfere with the conversations.

#### Recording the interview

I attempted to make written records of the interview but this proved to be very challenging. On reflection it was not done well. I was making intuitive, on the spot, decisions about what to record and what to exclude. The interviews were also digitally recorded and this was easy to manage and effective. The supervisors said that they forgot it was recording so did not restrain their conversation. Some brief and informal written notes were also made about my subjective views on the feel of the interview. This was relatively easy to do but on

reflection it may have affected the power relations. I may also have appeared to be a little removed from the conversation.

### Interview Questions

The questions that were asked of the supervisors prompted discussion. The supervisors though also took their conversation in other directions, sometimes inadvertently answering questions that had been prepared anyway. When shown the questions following interview, to seek their views on relevancy, the supervisors confirmed that the questions appeared to be appropriate. They said they were easily understood and covered the main issues they would anticipate as being important to supervisors. Suggestions were asked for additional questions but none were offered.

### Understanding the context

Some of what was discussed in the interview was closed to me because of unfamiliarity with the context. Discussion about specific areas of the playground for instance was not fully understood. Also, on reflecting afterwards, I wondered if there were things about the supervisor practices which they did not think to mention during interview, for whatever reason. This convinced me that observation at lunchtime could provide a joint reference.

### Lunchtime supervisors' story

I had anticipated that there might be some initial discussion about the convenience of the role of the supervisors, and indeed this is what happened. But fairly swiftly the supervisors begin to portray an image of the role as being multi-faceted. There was much about nurturing roles, supporting children to learn as they played, helping them to develop their social skills and identification of the



many practical duties that they have to do. There was also discussion of the tensions that surround lack of communication between them and other staff in school and the problems of behaviour management. This encouraged a sense of confidence that engaging supervisors in a semi-structured focus group interview would facilitate the telling of their story.

### **Confirmation**

On the basis of my experience of the preliminary study it was decided that:

- It would be a case-study. The supervisors would be interviewed as a focus group.
- The interview would be semi-structured, and about 2 hours would be allowed for the interview, to include informal chat.
- The same interview questions that were used for the preliminary study would be used for the first interview of the main study. It was accepted that not all questions might be needed as the supervisors would be at liberty to talk about what they wished to discuss.
- A room and refreshments would be provided.
- There would be an observation at lunchtime, followed by a second interview with the same group. This would provide a joint reference and opportunity for further discussion.
- The interviews would be digitally recorded.
- I would manage the group interview in the same way as I did for the preliminary study.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Letter Informing Parents and Guardians**

The Head Teacher of the school in the main study wrote to parents and guardians to inform them about the research. This is the main body of text from the letter.

Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends of xxxx School

#### **Enjoying Lunchtimes**

We are pleased to have a researcher working with our school this term. Mrs Debra Brewer is an Educational Psychologist who already works with us to support our pupils.

Debra has invited us to be part of further research that she wishes to undertake. This will involve talking with our lunchtime supervisors about lunchtimes in our school. Debra will also observe during one or two afternoons to get an idea about lunchtimes in our school.

This is a very positive opportunity for us at school to consider whether there is anything that we might do to improve the lunchtime experiences of our pupils. Debra will write a summary of the research once it is completed and this will be available in school should you wish to read it.

Let me just reassure you; Debra will not be talking with or identifying any individual pupils. Of course, they may choose to have an informal chat with her if they see her on the playground.

If you would like to talk about this research, with either myself or Debra, please do not hesitate to contact the school to arrange this. Alternatively you can contact Debra directly and her telephone number is xxx.

Yours sincerely

Name of Headteacher

## **Appendix 4**

### **Background information about Lunchtime at the School in the**

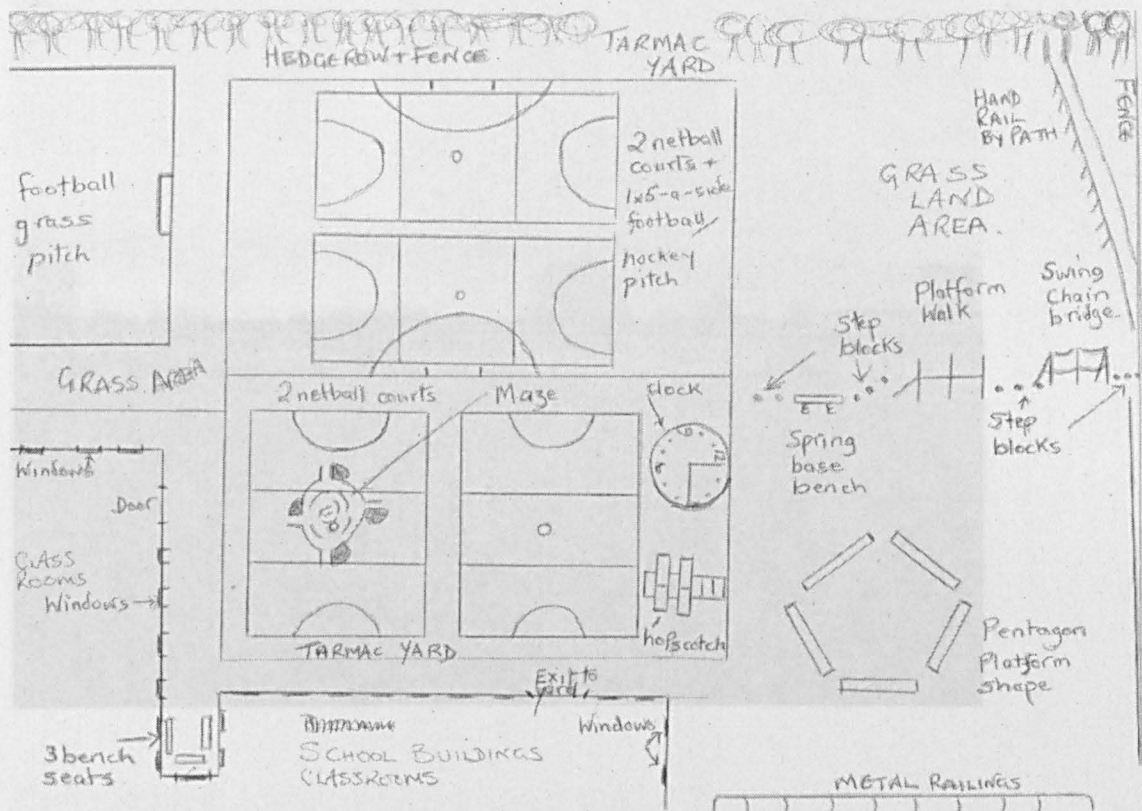
#### **Main Study (School B)**

These notes were based on informal discussion with the Head Teacher and lunchtime supervisors. An observation at lunchtime prior to conducting the research was also undertaken. A sketch was made of the playground. Some photographs were also taken. These are re-produced here with the permission of the Head Teacher of the school.

#### **Lunchtime facilities**

The school and the playground are fairly typical of schools built in the late 1950's. The school building is a long, low L-shape. This straddles the edge of a large tarmac playground which is at the back of the school. The playground is mainly rectangular in shape and extends to some depth and, in effect, produces two large playground areas. The playground area has mainly straight lines and few 'nooks and crannies'. An adult would be able to stand at a door to see most of the playground space. There are many windows over-looking the playground, including the staffroom windows. Entry onto the yard is via two main doors from the school building. A hand drawn sketch was made of the playground (Figure 4).

**Figure 4:** A Hand drawn sketch of the school playground as seen from the rear of the building



The playground has:

- Some faded playground markings (for instance court markings, a numbered snake, a clock and targets on a wall).
- A barked area of wooden balance beams.
- A small area is set aside as a quiet area to play, and this has some bench seating.
- There is also a reasonably sized playing field, which has some football posts (no nets). The field is bordered by housing, which is separated from the playing field by bushes and fences. To one side there is a public pathway, which is bordered by some overgrown bushes. This path is primarily used bringing children to school and collecting them again at the end of the day. The path isn't really on a route to anywhere else. To the other side, the grassed area extends to the front of the school building, which is fenced off. Access to the field is restricted according to weather conditions and the state of the field. This is communicated via a picture displayed in the staffroom window.

The following photographs show some of the playground features.

**Photograph 6: The playground looking back towards the rear of the school building**



**Photograph 7: The football pitch**





**Photograph 3: The quiet area**



other smaller games of football going on in other areas of the playground,

**Photograph 4: A painted playground marking**



children were observed to engage in during the lunch period included:

Access in to school at lunchtime is restricted to toilet use. One of the doors is locked and the other is manned by a supervisor.

There is some play equipment available to the children. This is brought out in two large bins. These contain items such as bats and balls, skipping ropes, balance balls and bean bags. There is no system in place for the use of this equipment. At the end of lunch children are requested by supervisors to help tidy up.

The children are free to choose where they play as there is no age segregation.

### **Activities**

Older children (mainly boys) tend to use the large tarmac yard (furthest away from the school building) to play football. If able to use the field, another football game, usually involving the older boys, takes place on there. There are usually other smaller games of football going on in other areas of the playground, particularly the yard area nearest to the school building. Other activities that children were observed to engage in during the lunch period included:

- Walking around.
- Talking.
- Running and chasing games.
- Role play games (e.g. heroes).
- Dancing, singing and chanting games.
- Games involving cards (e.g. Top Trumps).
- Chess club (inside and supervised by a teacher).

- Netball club during better weather, when netball nets are wheeled onto the playground.

Children tend not to make use of the playground markings.

### **Wet weather arrangements**

During wet weather the arrangements are that children remain in their own classes. The supervisors walk between classes to supervise. Some teaching staff are also available. Classes vary as to what they might be permitted to do. Some classes have boxes of games and materials that they can use, and these are purposefully set aside for such conditions. In some classes children are allowed to use the computers. In other classes children are encouraged to read and use paper and pencils to draw. The children are not permitted to wander between classes.

### **Dining Arrangements**

There is one large dedicated dining hall, which is not generally used for any other purpose during the school day.

Children can select to have a school lunch or to bring a packed lunch. School meals are prepared on site and weekly menus are displayed in a prominent position in the school. Packed lunches are stored in trolleys in the dining hall. Trolleys are marked according to classes. There are about 50 children who regularly bring a packed lunch. Very few children leave the school premises for lunch, usually only if there is an unusual event (such as a dental appointment). Children who have packed lunches are generally encouraged to sit in a particular area of the dining room.



For the Reception class the lunch period begins at 11.45am and they are collected from their class by the senior lunchtime supervisor and walked, in a line, to queue at the door of the dining hall. A few children at a time are released from the queue to collect a tray to go to the serving hatch, or collect their packed lunch.

At 12 noon a bell is rung to indicate the start of the lunch period for the remainder of the school. According to a rota, children come to queue at the dining hall door in year groups. The rota is displayed in school but the children appear to know when it is their turn to have 'first dinners'. Meanwhile other children can go out to play, until they are called. This involves a supervisor standing at a door to the playground and shouting which year group can come next. As with the Reception class, children are released from the queue to go to the serving hatch a few at a time.

The tables and chairs are arranged in long rows and children can choose where they sit (packed lunches being in the special packed lunch area). The serving of meals is usually completed by about 12.30pm. Individual children may be delayed because they eat slowly or came into lunch late.

The children are required to clear away their own trays, push chairs in, and then leave when they choose. Children are expected to go outside to play.

A whistle is blown by a supervisor to signal the end of lunch. The children are supposed to stop. A second whistle is blown and they are then expected to walk toward the doors into the school. They queue here in class lines. It is expected that their teachers will be at the head of these lines, to supervise and to escort them quietly back into class. The supervisors are expected to support this arrangement.

## **Observations on behaviour**

During discussions with the Head and supervisors prior to undertaking the research they expressed the view that behaviour at lunchtime was not a significant concern. They reported incidents of low-level aggression (pushing, kicking, and jumping on top of other children). They feel however that there are some individual children who are often unresponsive to the usual range of behaviour management strategies.

At this stage I also observed during a lunchtime and made some subjective observations about the children's behaviour.

The supervisors seemed to know the names of most of the children and chatted informally with many. There were lots of mutual smiles. Supervisors appeared to have a positive and friendly approach towards the children. Verbal praise was offered but there were no tangible rewards. Verbal reprimand was the main sanction observed to be in use, often given quietly and privately, but not always. There were times when supervisors shouted across the playground at children and at times it was difficult for the supervisors to get their attention. The supervisors walked around the playground and the field to make their presence known.

The children came to the dining hall queue in a relatively quiet and calm manner. On the whole the behaviour of the children in the dining hall was good, though it was fairly noisy and children were inconsistent about cleaning away their trays. Similarly when on the playground the behaviour of the children was generally observed to be acceptable. The main issues that supervisors had to deal with were complaints from other children about boisterous play, name calling, not sharing equipment and throwing bark. There was also considerable time spent

on keeping children outside of the school building. Requests to return inside to use the toilet were frequent, which in effective occupied one supervisor. The supervisor claimed to know which children genuinely needed the toilet and which ones would be likely to stay inside longer and perhaps misbehave. There was some desultory behaviour and some children looked to me to be rather bored. Some of the games that children engaged in were quite physical and loud. There was a fair amount of rushing around. The football game on the field was some distance away which meant that supervision of this was much reduced.

There was a point when there were more children on the playground than in the dining hall, but not all the supervisors had yet moved out into the playground. This could potentially have made it more difficult to ensure the children's safety and good behaviour. It also reduced the opportunity to facilitate children's play, social skills and learning.

The public pathway creates a security risk. The children enjoyed playing in the nearby bushes which again made it harder to supervise their activities.

Supervisors expressed concern about what they might find in the bushes.

Children were becoming impatient waiting to return to class (having queued and waited for the class teacher).

### **Supervisor Details and Duties**

There were five lunchtime supervisor involved in the main study for the research, four female and one male. There appeared to be a range of age. There was a range of experience, for instance one supervisor had worked at the school for many years and another had joined within the last year. One supervisor had an additional role in school as a Teaching Assistant. One supervisor was a 'senior

supervisor'. This involved starting slightly earlier than the others each day, liaising with the Head Teacher and supervising the work of the other supervisors. Children of four of the five supervisors had attended, or were attending, the school. One also now had grandchildren at the school. No further information about education, qualifications or experience were sought or observed.

The senior lunchtime supervisor is employed from 11.30am and is expected to ensure the First Aid room is tidy and prepared. The senior has to be available for the school secretary or Head Teacher to share important information. The senior escorts the Reception class to the dining hall. The remaining four supervisors begin their duties at 11.45am. All supervisors are employed until 1pm. The reality is that all supervisors arrive early for duty (they are usually on site at about 11.30am) and leave late (between 1.15pm and 1.30pm). The supervisors do not receive a meal from the school but instead chose to receive payment in lieu.

The supervisors have agreed a rota between them, which is the subject of change in the light of their discussions. During the lunch period the demands are such that supervisors are required in different areas of the school at different times. For instance at the start of lunch there are fewer children outside on the playground and more in the dining hall, so staff is allocated accordingly. Towards the latter part of the lunchtime, when most children are outside, all of the supervisors are also outside.

There is regular informal contact with the Head Teacher, usually concerning a child's behaviour. Similarly there is some informal contact with class teachers. The Head Teacher or a senior member of staff will often be present in the dining hall. There are no teaching staff on duty on the playground during lunch, but the Head or senior member of staff is available in the school.

The supervisors were not familiar with a job description and there was not one readily available for me to consider. The supervisors are directly responsible to the Head Teacher.

The supervisors did not have a room to meet and said that they wouldn't go into the staffroom. They congregate in the school entrance lobby. They stored their personal belongings in a cloakroom. A tabard is provided by the school for their use.

### **Summary**

Based on my previous experiences information gathered about the school background presents a fairly typical profile of many similar sized primary schools. The playground has a somewhat barren appearance, possibly more so than some other schools that I have visited. I observed some aspects that seemed to work well (for instance the supervisors presented as a team). I observed that there were some concerns about the lunchtime arrangements (for instance class teachers were sometimes not ready to supervise children back into class). I observed some aspects which could be improved (a greater range of small play equipment and for the use of this to be better organised and more purposeful).

## **Appendix 5**

### **Lunchtime Supervisors Focus Group**

#### **Interview 1**

#### **Possible Questions**

- What prompted you to apply for the job?
- What does the role encompass?
- What makes an effective supervisor?
- What makes a good lunchtime?
- What does 'supervision' mean to you?
- What do you think that the teachers/parents/children think your role is?
- How is your role similar to, or different from, teachers/parents?
- Particular concerns about your job?
- Particular barriers to your job?
- What are the factors that facilitate you being able to supervise?
- Think of yourself when you first started – how are you different now?
- How do you feel about the job?
- Miracle question – how would lunchtime look then?

**Appendix 6**

**The Completed Lunchtime Matrix**

This Lunchtime Matrix is a record of the observations made during lunchtime at the school in the main study (School B). Aspects of these observations were used to prompt discussion during the second interview.

<b><u>Key Themes</u></b>	<b><u>Works Well</u></b>	<b><u>Concerns</u></b>
<b><u>Organisation and Duties</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supervisors meet in foyer for chat.</li><li>• All staff welcome to use staff room.</li><li>• Work as a team – informally.</li><li>• Queues work well.</li><li>• Duration of lunchtime fine.</li><li>• Rota system – some in and some out. Then all out. Time works ok.</li><li>• Dining system efficient.</li><li>• Dining areas relatively tidy.</li><li>• Acceptable noise level.</li><li>• Clear allocation of duties.</li><li>• Get to know students.</li><li>• They know what they're doing.</li><li>• Very busy, all over the place.</li><li>• Standing and watching too.</li><li>• Timing seems enough for lunch and play.</li><li>• Playground buddies.</li><li>• A stable team.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited facilities available for supervisors (to meet for example).</li><li>• Congestion in some areas - cloakroom.</li><li>• Big area.</li><li>• What are they called?</li><li>• Too busy to facilitate social learning?</li><li>• Buddies engrossed in own games – how does a child get help?</li></ul>
<b><u>Facilities and activities available to students</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One dedicated dining room.</li><li>• Large tarmac areas (2).</li><li>• Field.</li><li>• Markings.</li><li>• Bin of small stuff bean bag, balls, jumpy things.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Very large and open playground area.</li><li>• Some hidden areas e.g. cloakroom, small football field, bushes.</li><li>• Barren yard space.</li><li>• Limited seating.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beam and bark area.</li> <li>• Out of bounds (toilets, round corner of football). Children seem to know.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties supervising students in classrooms and on corridors.</li> <li>• Strangers entering site.</li> <li>• Bushes are a long way off – can they see?</li> <li>• Markings faded – not used.</li> <li>• Beam area messy -chippings thrown. Not very exciting.</li> <li>• Lot of effort keeping them out of school.</li> <li>• Shade?</li> </ul>
<b><u>Interaction (each other)</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In passing.</li> <li>• Seem to know what they're each doing.</li> <li>• Walked over to sort problem.</li> <li>• Smiling.</li> <li>• The meeting at beginning and as they leave together.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiet area to chat to discuss in confidence?</li> <li>• Planned opportunities to talk?</li> </ul>
<b><u>Interaction (other staff)</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None observed.</li> <li>• At line up teachers attention on class.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers late for collecting their class.</li> <li>• Children hanging around.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Interaction (children)</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping packets, checking packed lunches, what's eaten.</li> <li>• Bending down.</li> <li>• Smiling, lots of this.</li> <li>• Chatting socially.</li> <li>• Laughing.</li> <li>• Arm around.</li> <li>• Some teasing.</li> <li>• Helping with things (e.g. yogurt lid).</li> <li>• Reminders about trays.</li> <li>• Some advice (e.g. to walk not run).</li> <li>• Lot of verbal praise.</li> <li>• Talking to lots of different children.</li> <li>• Moving around.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too informal, I wonder?</li> </ul>
<b><u>Rules / Guidelines</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow routines/rules in dining rooms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I do not know what the rules are.</li> <li>• Nobody mentions any.</li> <li>• Not on display.</li> <li>• Out of bounds areas not consistently applied (e.g. classrooms).</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and students may be uncertain about rules/routines, or they may be inconsistently applied. I do not know?</li> <li>• Limited sanctions/rewards available to supervisors. I did not see any.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Activities</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lot of walking, running.</li> <li>• Talking.</li> <li>• Mixed age groups.</li> <li>• Girls and boy play together.</li> <li>• Small play – free for all.</li> <li>• Chasing – lots of this, girls and boys, all ages.</li> <li>• Hand clapping game.</li> <li>• Cards swap.</li> <li>• Football.</li> <li>• Other ball games.</li> <li>• Made up games (not sure what they are).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small play – free for all.</li> <li>• Do not stay long with it. Just left lying at end.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Behaviours</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour in dining room was good.</li> <li>• Generally lunchtimes appear calm and well organised.</li> <li>• Behaviour / attitudes of many children fine.</li> <li>• Supervisors appear to have positive, friendly approach to children.</li> <li>• When asked to stop, they do.</li> <li>• One argue back – supervisor firm.</li> <li>• On the whole seem fine.</li> <li>• Individuals and small groups (e.g. one group look like they're up to something). Supervisor notices and comes over.</li> <li>• Argument – separated and listened to individually.</li> <li>• Praise seen.</li> <li>• Call their names, quiet word. Private.</li> <li>• Issue dealt with but children go to other supervisor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties in supervising and hidden corners have potential for inappropriate behaviours and bullying.</li> <li>• Some children not always responsive to supervisors.</li> <li>• Desultory behaviour, from some children.</li> <li>• Supervisor's presence not always visible.</li> <li>• Getting children's attention.</li> <li>• Supervisors often on their own.</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Equal Opportunities</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some quiet areas available for some children.</li> <li>• Supervisors are different with younger/older.</li> <li>• Free play.</li> <li>• No different areas for different ages (formally at least).</li> <li>• Lunch rota (which they seem to know).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domination of football for a limited number of children.</li> <li>• Territories?</li> <li>• Are children socialising in toilets?</li> <li>• Quiet area running around.</li> <li>• Older boys play on yard further away from building.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Goals</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting through lunch in an efficient way.</li> <li>• Having chance to play.</li> <li>• Getting on with each other.</li> <li>• Lot of social chat.</li> <li>• To enjoy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were they making the most of the opportunities, I do not know? Could they have more fun?</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 7**

### **Lunchtime Supervisors Focus Group**

#### **Interview 2**

#### **Possible Questions**

- You are called 'lunchtime supervisors'. Would you prefer to have a different title, and why?
- What went well during that lunchtime? Why?
- What did not go so well? Why?
- How could it have been improved?
- Were there any barriers?
- Was there anything that particularly helped?
- I noticed that some areas of the playground seemed to be out of bounds. Can you tell me about those? How do the children use the space?
- Describe some of the activities that children enjoyed during the lunchtime.
- Last time you talked about children learning how to play, and develop their social skills. Do you feel they had opportunity to do this?
- There was a child who ....(recall specific incidents)
- Do you think that (specific incidents) could have been handled differently, in what way and why?
- I noticed that you... Can you discuss why a supervisor might do that?
- Would you have wanted to do that differently?

- What else might you have done?
- How did you work together?
- What was the role of other school staff?
- Can you recall doing anything and thinking to yourself, 'Oh no she will have seen me do that', and why.
- In a similar vein anything that you wished I'd seen, and why?

## **Appendix 8**

### **Annotated Version of Interview 1**

## Appendix 8

### Annotated Version of Interview 1

#### Lunchtime Supervisors Focus Group Interview 1

*Transcription conventions:*

- *Researcher questions/comments are in bold font.*
- *Noises of assent (e.g. hmm) have been removed.*
- *Names have been altered to anonymous initials.*

	1	<b>I'm interested in your views about the purpose of</b>	
	2	<b>lunchtimes?</b>	
Support teachers	3	To let the children let off a bit of steam I think.	Supporting role
Permitting obligation	4	Playtime, yes to play, to play as children.	Play as child
Uncertain?	5	To chill out, to give the teachers a rest.	Obligation
	6	To get them fed.	
Obvious	7	Well obviously lunch.	Physical need
Physical needs	8	Get them fed, yeah.	Assumption
Not as adults	9	If it's an indoor play cos it's raining, you can tell the	Well team
Use them	10	difference. I can when I'm in on the afternoon, you can	agreeing / say
Agreeing each other	11	tell when they're in class. It's as if they've been shut in	
Checking / confirming	12	and they haven't run off any of their steam and they're a	Knowing and
Knowing and understanding children	13	bit hyper.	
I know - a	14	<b>You say that in the afternoon you can tell when they</b>	
Responsibility	15	<b>haven't been out. Can you say a bit more about that?</b>	
Support teachers	16	Well having a break helps with their learning, and that, I	Knowing / and children
Unsure, belief, hesitant	17	think anyway.	
Confirming	18	Oh yeah, they can settle.	
Explain to me - 'you see'	19	It's a switch off from books you see, at lunchtimes.	Play-free for pressure
Re-affirming (team)	20	As you say they run off their steam.	
Needs of child - physical, steam	21	And they need that time, if they've been doing literacy	Break helps with learning
We've observed - we know	22	and numeracy well of course they've been thinking and	
Learning - play	23	then they go out and have a bit talk with their pals.	Social Need
Need a break from learning / pressure?	24	Sometimes the junior end discusses it with their selves as	
Peer support	25	well.	
Social	26	<b>Can you tell me more about the purpose of</b>	Physical skills
Football	27	<b>lunchtimes?</b>	
Agreeing / checking	28	It's good for football practice too.	
	29	Oh yeah, football.	

Why need to  
practise skills?  
Nurture / protect

Agreeing 30  
Recognising child's 31  
strengths? 32  
Opportunity 33  
Social interactions 34  
age / peers 35  
Caring side of 36  
child / power of 37  
age 38  
Being systems? 39  
They see - they 40  
know 41  
Age - maturity 42  
like to help - why 43  
We can see 44  
Even boys - 45  
expectations 46  
Role of mother 47  
Gender issues 48  
Child's esteem 49  
Supervisors are 50  
very busy / practical 51  
'fell good' why? 52  
Success on playground 53  
Identifying problems 54  
'We' together - 55  
insider knowledge 56  
Fun 'should be' 57  
- means it's not? 58  
Limited opp for 59  
play - community 60  
society / protected 61  
children play 62  
experimenting 63  
Wonder 64  
Challenge 65  
Help / facilitate 66  
Belong to group 67  
of supervisors 68

They're practising the skills.

**What skills do you think they  
practice at lunchtime?**

Social skills.  
They mix with other classes.  
Yeah they don't just mix with their own  
classmates.  
Some of the older ones will look after  
little ones, especially when little  
brothers come or little sisters or  
somebody next door, the older ones,  
boys and girls will help.  
They get to that certain age in the junior  
end, boys and girls, and you can see  
that they like to help more, they start to  
mother them, even the boys y'know,  
you can see them helping. If we're  
doing something and they see someone wants a  
shoe lace doing or something, and we're doing  
something else, they'll say, 'I'll do it' and they're  
very eager to do it for them, aren't they?  
It makes them feel good to help out.  
I think that's one of the things about being on the  
playground, even the ones who find class work  
hard can play and get some success.  
Yeah but what about those ones that don't join in,  
or don't have friends?  
Well that's where we can help, cos we know who  
they are don't we?  
Tell you what we haven't said. They should be  
having fun, a bit of a laugh.  
You're right we sometimes forget that don't we?  
We're so busy sorting everything out. It's good for  
them to play though isn't it? Some of them don't  
get much chance to do that nowadays.  
No the streets are different now.  
And mums and dads take them everywhere, and  
there's more club like things.  
Playing is like experimenting isn't it. Mums and  
Dads, Doctors and Nurses. 'Oh I wonder if I can  
catch the ball 10 times'. Things they like, they

Individual child  
similarities / difference

Gender, age  
self-esteem

Knowing children

Position to see  
and know

Expectations

Parent role

Busy role

Isolated individual  
problems

Insider knowledge

Support children

Conflict: fun / practice

Play - community  
and society changes

Wonder of play  
Challenge  
Facilitate the  
Fun

Belong to a group of  
2 Supervisors

Challenge,		
mystery of play	71	
Limitless of fs	72	
	73	
Different, taken	74	
for granted play	75	
Reflect	76	
'Even' - belief?	77	
Not making use	78	
of potential	79	
Enjoyment of	80	
children's play	81	
Appreciate	82	
children	83	
	84	
Personal memories	85	
comparisons, nothing	86	
new	87	
Joy of children	88	
playing / talking	89	
They know - they	90	
see - important	91	
to listen	92	
Enter world of	93	
child - privilege	94	
Supervisor pleasure	95	
Not giving too much	96	
away to child	97	
rethink fun - not	98	
all time	99	
World of child	100	
Child's adult to	101	
Join them / share	102	
Children's culture	103	
Play - private	104	
imagination	105	
Joy of observing	106	
children play	107	
Child in control	108	
What to see not do	109	
it for them	110	
Own memory of	111	
play - Play has	112	
changed	113	
Society influences		

have a go and see what happens, where it takes them.

They do all sorts of things don't they, when you think about it. Running and skipping, catching.

Some of them even learn little songs, rhymes and that.

Counting, they do a lot of counting.

Well there's that number snake thing.

Yeah but they don't really use that do they?

I like to see when they make up their own games.

Some of them come up with great ideas.

But don't you sometimes think, 'I used to play a game just like that'. A lot of the games are the same but with a bit of variation.

Seeing children having physically active fun, playing in small groups or even just talking. I like to see that. Just kinda getting on with each other.

I laugh sometimes, the things some of them say.

You've just got to listen to them haven't you?

Aye and sometimes I have to hide a smile, the ways they've maybes put it, or something they've told you about their dad like and y'know they'd go mad.

You certainly have a laugh with them at times.

You do wonder don't you where they get their ideas from. I mean sometimes they come up to me and tell me all about this game they've maybes made up. It has all these rules and such. And d'you know what, I haven't got a clue what they're talking about. I mean if I had to go and play the game I'd be lost, but they seem to know what's what.

Yeah they go into a corner and turn it into a space ship and their imagination is great isn't it? A leaf turns into a special thing that gives power or a sound makes them travel through time. It's lovely to see and yet I know if I'd said, 'Play with that pile of leaves' they'd look at me like I was a spaceman or something.

But d'you not think they do less of that than when we were younger? I mean they seem to want to sit back and be entertained don't they? It's with the electronic games and the television, they don't

Play - opportunity - challenge, mystery, not affecting

Reflective practice - but limited opportunity for this.

Belief - even

Enjoying children's play  
Positive emotions -  
memories  
Joy

Understanding the children

World of child - access to

Supervisor's world

Joint / shared  
experiences

Children's culture

Child in control  
of play

Society influences  
on play



# TEXT BOUND CLOSE TO THE SPINE IN THE ORIGINAL THESIS

imaginative play 114 have to think now, just press a button.  
 115 Up to a point I'd agree with you but you've only  
 116 got to look at them on the yard, they do make up  
 117 their own little games.  
 118 Granted they do, but sometimes it's based on what  
 119 they've seen on the tele.  
 120 Aye but didn't we do that as well? I mean were  
 121 you never a Dalek? Didn't Skippy never come to  
 122 save you?  
 123 It was Lassie wasn't it?  
 124 Aye him and all.  
 125 The girls do I think. They make up more games.  
 126 Well they seem to play more I think.  
 127 But the little ones do as well.  
 128 Well they were all little at one time and that's what  
 129 I like to see, the way they change. The come in all  
 130 bright eyed and bushy tailed, maybes a little bit  
 131 wary. They make some friends and find their feet  
 132 and before y'know it they're these big hulking  
 133 Year 6's with all the confidence of I don't know  
 134 what. And that's great cos they need to be like that  
 135 when they move up to big school.  
 136 Some of them are too big for their own boots.  
 137 But that's part of growing up too. They need to  
 138 find their feet.  
 139 Some of them are like, what is it, locking their  
 140 horns trying to find who's top dog.  
 141 Odd though isn't it, how some are top yet you can't  
 142 explain why. It's not like they have a vote or  
 143 anything but they all seem to know who's who. No  
 144 matter what we say or do they sort out the pecking  
 145 order.  
 146 Kids have done from time began. I remember at  
 147 my school there was always a lad that we all did  
 148 what he wanted and d'you know he never once had  
 149 a fight or gave wrong word. I don't know what it  
 150 was about him.  
 151 He's probably a big boss now making a fortune  
 152 having his underlings run round after him.  
 153 You can sometimes see how some of them are  
 154 gonna turn out can't you?  
 155 Well sometimes you only have to look at their  
 156 families. It's a shame really; some of them don't

Imaginative play

TV influence on play

Gender, age, experience - power?

Changes in children

Apprentice / share in play

Changes in children  
childhood culture  
Power - top dog  
social hierarchy

Play same over time

Expectations of children

Family influence -  
perceived as  
poor

Some have better starts in life 'chance'	157	stand a chance.	
Gender	158	I was saying before about girls playing but when I	
play	159	think about it, have you seen how the boys love it	
differences	160	when the girls get them to join in with their games?	Individual differ. and power (age, gender) and restrictions on activities
Boys image	161	What is it about the boys like? D'you think they	
	162	worry what they'll look like to their mates?	
Boys lack imagination - challenged	163	Maybes aye, they need a bit of help to let	
	164	themselves go a bit. Or perhaps they lack the	
Expectation of boys - more physical	165	imagination of the girls.	
	166	No, I don't think it's that. I think it's just boys are	Physical need
	167	sorta expected to run around more, or play fight.	
	168	The girls don't do they? You never see them	
	169	rolling around on the floor like the way the boys	
	170	do.	
Childhood culture	171	D'you know what, you're right there. You don't do	Childhood culture - starting to realise this
	172	you? But it's like with the made up games, it's not	
Not thought about some of this	173	as though we tell them what to do. Nor the teachers	
	174	or the mams. I mean you wouldn't say would you,	
	175	'Go and have a bit roll on the dirty ground with	Limited time to talk and reflect
	176	your friend today son'. It's funny that when you	
	177	think.	
	178	<b>Can you tell me what your job involves?</b>	
List is long?			
Begin practical	179	Oh where do we start? Let's see, there's collecting	Challenge of supervisor's role - lots of practical tasks
Cultural of purpose - play, social	180	them from class, lining them up, seeing to them in	
	181	the hall, tidying up with them. A lot of them don't	
	182	think to push their chairs in and some need	
We, again	183	reminding about their trays.	
Team thing	184	We help them opening things don't we?	We/team Belonging
Adult helps - power?	185	Aye cutting up their food.	
	186	We even have to show them how to use the	Adult power
With-togetherness	187	cutlery.	
	188	And remind them about manners. I'm always	
Child reads adult explanation	189	pausing like and they get the message and then	
	190	you get a please or a thank you.	Adult and child agendas
Be prepared	191	Wiping noses.	
	192	I always have spare tissues just in case.	
There for child	193	I've even had to pull teeth out on occasion, or	
Child needs reminders	194	look after a tooth that's come out, ready for the	
	195	tooth fairy.	
Sort all problems	196	We sort out any little problems.	Obligation to sort problems
Unpleasant jobs	197	And big ones.	

We

Talk, listen

comfort

reassure

first aid

settle

Nature gear

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We blow the whistle and get them back in.

We talk to them, and listen of course.

We do a lot of comforting.

Yeah, reassuring them if they feel poorly, doing bits of first aid.

We have to settle in the new ones.

**What do you think that the teachers think your role is?**

Just to keep everything ship shape.

Yeah, they want things to go smoothly on a lunchtime so they don't have to get involved.

I agree with that, they hate it if you bother them.

But they have to have a break don't they?

Oh yeah, I'm not saying that but sometimes it

would be good if when you went to get some support they didn't huff and puff like. They need to support us to do our job.

But we're the ones getting paid to get on with it.

We're the mugs who have to clean up after kids, keep them in lines and make sure they're not pulling down the displays, sorting out bits bother, having a chat and wiping sore knees.

That's what our job is.

Aye, I think if you asked the teachers that's what they'd say, all of what you just said, but I don't think they think too much about it to be honest. As long as we keep the kids out of their hair they're happy. They've got too much on their own plates to worry about what we should be doing.

Well I think they maybes just leave it to the Head and assume that she'll keep us right, so to speak.

**What do you think that the teacher's think is the purpose of lunchtimes?**

Like us, they see it as a chance for the kids to get a bit run around.

Again, I don't think they think too much about it to be honest. I suppose if you put them on the spot they'd probably say all the right things, such as getting on with each other, learning to play,

Nature

We

Smooth  
lunchtime  
(desired)

Emotional  
reaction chat

Support /  
communication  
for and with  
teachers - to

Power of  
superiors - limit  
rights

Insignificance of  
superior

Organisation  
important to  
teachers?

'Smoothly'  
Don't want to  
get involved.

Hate / bother  
strong emotive  
words.

Teachers need a  
break.

Lack of support  
from staff.

Get paid to get  
on - expect help

Right to expect?  
Mugs - put up or

Teachers don't  
think - too

busy.

Head keep us  
right.

Shared  
understanding

Practical / Physical

Don't think  
teachers

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Teachers don't worry	237	practicing their physical skills, having a chat,	
	238	maybe even learning some table manners. But	
	239	really from one day to the next I don't think they	
	240	worry too much about it.	
Demonstrate no interest - don't see or have ideas	241	Well they certainly can't do cos they never want to	Lack of voice
	242	come out and see what's going on.	
	243	Or have any ideas as to how we could all make	Teachers expectation of lunchtimes
	244	things much better for the kids.	
Lunch/break - that's it.	245	Yeah, lunchtime for the teachers is about the kids	
	246	getting their lunch and having a break, and the	
	247	same for the teachers too.	
Don't worry	248	They don't even seem to worry too much about	
	249	whether bullying or such like is going on. Cos if	
Bullying potential - children know	250	it's going to happen it'll be on a lunchtime.	Blame culture
	251	Well it's bound to isn't it? We can't be	
Can't blame supervisors	252	everywhere all of the time and the kids know	Opportunity for poor behaviour
	253	where to get into little corners, or in the cloakroom,	
	254	or wherever, if they wanted to have a go at	
	255	someone.	
Blame - unfair	256	Aye, and then the parents go mad because we	Children's culture
	257	should have stopped it happening at lunch. When	
Children know more than adults	258	little ones go home they tell their mams what's	
	259	going on so they know more than the teachers do.	
	260	Sometimes more than we do.	
	261	<b>What do you think that the parents think your</b>	
	262	<b>role is?</b>	
Supervisors not thinking about other ideas.	263	I don't know. I've never given that much thought.	Time for reflection limited
	264	No, I know when there's a problem we soon get to	
Blame again - unfair.	265	hear what they think we should and shouldn't have	
	266	done.	
Feedback on problem.	267	Like the teachers really.	Unfairness of blame
Parents expect happy lunch	268	Aye, you're not wrong there. But I guess they want	
	269	their kids to play nicely like. To have a good time.	
Play-learning	270	They like to think of their child with a lovely big	Play and learning
	271	smile, running around, getting on with everybody	
	272	and having a high old time.	
	273	I don't know if the mams and dads realise though	
	274	that when the children are playing they are learning	
	275	as well.	
	276	What d'you mean?	
	277	Well as we were saying before, learning to get on	

Learning opportunities	278	with others, counting when they walk on the
Parents don't realise	279	number lines, learning rhymes and such like. I
Children don't either	280	mean, that's what the children are doing isn't it? It's
Parent memory and expectations	281	not just about getting rid of their energy after
	282	sitting at their desks. The learning just carries on,
	283	but in a different way.
	284	Aye and they don't even know they're learning.
	285	Just as well really, cos if they did, they would stop.
	286	I think some of them, the mams and that, they
	287	remember how it was for them on the playground
	288	and depending on how that was they want the same
	289	or better for their little'uns.
Want same for their children as they had	290	Well we all have our own school memories don't
Disappointingly not? Romantic view of school days	291	we? I suppose if they remember playing with two
	292	balls or marbles they want theirs to do the same.
	293	But some of the younger parents wouldn't
	294	remember some of them games.
	295	Yes but a lot of the old games are still there aren't
	296	they? Just that they look a bit different, or have a
	297	different name. We still see them playing British
Same games - variation of	298	Bulldog and that, but they maybe don't call it that.
Football - not new obsession	299	The younger one's do certainly.
Children play, lunchtime always the same over time	300	The older ones are more into their football.
	301	But weren't they always? Haven't older boys at
	302	school always wanted to kick a ball about?
	303	Nothing's changed really. It just feels different to
	304	us.
	305	You're maybe right there, and I think it's nice to
	306	see the children playing because they don't get
	307	much chance at home, what with the way things
Limited play at home. Influence of technology	308	are now and them play station things.
	309	Y'know you asked us about parents and that, well I
Lunchtime - play, happy, no problems - it's what parents want	310	think they think lunchtimes are about having a
	311	right good play and being happy. Not having to put
	312	up with any bother or worry about schoolwork.
	313	And if they thought about it they would probably
	314	say it was good for their children to do this at
	315	school, because they get little chance to do it at any
	316	other time.
Parents don't really think	317	Yes, but as with the teachers, do they really think
	318	about this?
	319	We should maybe tell them.
Gender of parents	320	The mams, it's always the mams isn't it, they want

Sound learning

Expectations of other

Play and learning

Memories of play

Expectations of play

Play is same over time  
Romantic view

Football

Play - positive, happy, no pressure  
Gender / age

Changes in home / sandy

Pleasure in children's play

Well / team

Confirming, seeking agreement

Limited thought about lunchtimes (teachers)

Safe Simple	321	us to keep their little bundles of treasure safe,
Lunchtime	322	that's what they want. They want us to make sure
secret to	323	they eat their lunch and they have a good time, and
parents	324	that's it. Simple really.
but supervisors	325	If only they could see what some of their treasures
know.	326	get up to sometimes, it'd turn their hair blue.
Over-protective	327	I worry about all this fuss about safety though. I
	328	mean banning conkers, what is all that about? How
Humour	329	many kids do you know that have been killed by a
	330	raging mad conker?
Risk needed	331	We are too soft with kids now. I think a bit of risk
	332	is good for children. They need to try walking
Learn from	333	along a thin beam and get their balance. And if
mistakes	334	they fall off they learn how to do it better next
	335	time. And really what's the most that's likely to
Limits of risk	336	happen, a bruised knee usually. There's not many
	337	cases I don't think where children have come to a
Risks in life.	338	sad end of a lunchtime. You could just as easily be
Evidence for	339	knocked over by a bus. Enjoy life and take a bit
concern question	340	risk, that's what I say. It's what life is about.
	341	They know, well most of them do, they know how
Children know	342	far to go. I mean you wouldn't find them trying to
- trust them	343	scale up the side of the school wall or do
	344	something really dangerous. Kid's aren't daft and I
Give them	345	think we should give them more credit than we do.
more credit	346	They usually have some common sense.
common sense	347	Aye and if we don't tell them another child will.
Children support	348	Well it's like arguments between them isn't it?
learn from	349	How often do we hear fall outs and just leave them
each other	350	to it? They need to sort it out their selves cos we
Sort out own	351	won't be there all of the time to do it for them.
problems.		
Prepare for	352	<b>What do you think that the children think your</b>
future.	353	<b>role is?</b>
Servant -	354	You'd think it was to be a servant the way we
practical.	355	have to clean up after them.
Rely on supervisor	356	Children seem to realise that we're not teachers
children	357	but we're in charge.
understand	358	By and large they do as we ask.
our role	359	I think this is because they're used with adults
comply, make	360	telling them what to do. I don't think they think
it they do	361	any more than that.
with adults.		

Safety  
over- protection  
risk  
learning

Childhood culture  
- parents don't know

Supervisors share  
lunchtime world  
with children

Humour

Trust in children,  
independence, common  
sense, able to resolve  
own problems, support  
each other  
(we don't do this)  
"trust"

Prepare for  
future

Rely on supervisor

Practical tasks,  
routines

Rely on supervisor

Compliance with  
adults (power,  
relationships, agenda?)

Sometimes  
don't do as  
asked -  
disappointed?  
(resigned)

'In our way'  
- Learning  
boundaries  
Children know  
how far to go

Children know  
how to play  
system/supervisors  
'Canny'

Know how far  
to go

Children make it  
each other  
Watch them  
Quick is a  
sign  
Blame others  
Seek help

Work supervisors  
to play  
'Even' older ones  
Expectations  
like to be  
appointed/  
wanted

Children play/  
acting out

Want to  
capture the  
fun

'We, again  
'Us'  
Look to  
supervisors  
'don't let'

But they don't always do what we ask do they?  
You're right there.  
But mostly they do, maybes in their own way.  
That's part of the learning though isn't it? Pushing  
boundaries, seeing how far they can push things,  
and us.  
Sometimes y'know they're so clever at knowing  
just how far to go, and then they pull back. Or  
they maybe do something they shouldn't but make  
it look as though it's okay really.  
How d'you mean?  
I can't explain it really. I suppose if they want a  
play fight like they laugh and make it look like a  
great game so's we won't say anything.  
They're canny mind at knowing when to stop with  
each other mainly. They maybe argue, or tease or  
something but it never goes really over the top  
does it?  
Some don't know where to stop.  
No, but most do, and when they don't we tell them  
or someone comes and tells us.  
It's when they go quiet you have to watch them.  
They even do something and look all innocent as if  
to say 'What's the problem?'  
Or do it, and then blame somebody else.  
They do come to us though if there's a problem  
and want us to sort it out for them.  
And they look to us to play with them sometimes.  
They like that don't they, even the older ones  
sometimes. They like us to join in with them. It's  
nice really. Makes you realise the jobs worthwhile  
after all when they do that.  
The other week they must have been doing  
something on the Great Fire of London. Can you  
remember that group that started off playing a  
game where some of them were trapped and  
firemen were coming to save them?  
Aye and before we knows it, a whole load had  
joined in and what a big drama it turned into.  
Wish I'd had a video, it was better than the school  
play.  
Now, watch, don't let Mrs B. hear you say that.

Compliance - not  
resignation, expect

Social learning -  
testing boundaries

Children  
understanding  
self-control  
judgement

Children know -  
culture  
what supervisors  
expect

They know/understand  
children (and their  
agenda)

Watch

Childhood culture  
Drawing supervisors  
in

Want to be  
appointed/needed

Fun of play

We

Startling supervisors  
compared to teachers



404 **What made you apply for the job?**

405 I was asked if there was any parents, this was  
 406 years ago, before the police checks, if there were  
 407 any parents who would come in at 5 minutes  
 408 notice if any of the regulars were off and then I  
 409 was asked to help one to one with a particular  
 410 child and when that child left there was a vacancy  
 411 so I stopped.  
 412 I was the same, I started as a relief.  
 413 I got them all in.  
 414 Yeah I was a relief and then there was a job when  
 415 somebody left and I took the full time.  
 416 I was much the same.  
 417 Me too.  
 418 It's handy though isn't it? I don't suppose any of  
 419 us, like you would with a super star or a train  
 420 driver or whatever, dream of being a dinner lady.  
 421 But you kinda fall into it.

Needed by school

Not a job of choice  
- convenience

Belong to a group

I - status of senior

Us - belong to a group

422 **What is it about the job that makes you carry on**  
 423 **with it?**

424 Well it's convenient, mostly.  
 425 Well I started off because my children where in  
 426 the school. For us mothers it's a great job because  
 427 it fits in. It's only that hour or so and it's bit of  
 428 pocket money and it fits in with the children. But  
 429 of course I've been in 14 years now and my  
 430 children now are in their 20's and I'm still here  
 431 and I just love it.  
 432 I think I did it in spite of my daughter being here,  
 433 she didn't like me being here at all but I liked  
 434 working with the children.  
 435 It's very challenging. Yes it is. It is a bit. It's  
 436 different. I like that about the job.  
 437 **You say it's challenging. In what way?**

Convenience

Enjoy (love) role

Like working with children

Challenge of role

Challenge, variety

438 Yes it is. Sometimes it's hard work, you feel like  
 439 hanging your pinny up because they are horrible  
 440 but other days they can be really nice. There's  
 441 variety and you can put up with some bad days.

Challenge		
Awful	442	Indoor days are challenging. They can be awful.
Count to 10 -	443	Sometimes you find yourself counting to 10.
patience	444	It's a very limited time so you can get away at the
	445	end of lunch. You get away after an hour.
Limited time	446	The holidays are good. You get the holidays.
'get away' -	447	You're off for six weeks and you think that's
feel trapped?	448	good because you wouldn't get that anywhere
Holidays	449	else.
Release after an	450	
hour		<b>How do you feel about the challenge of your</b>
Balanced view	451	<b>job as a lunchtime supervisor?</b>
Lot to do, think	452	Well I don't know really. I suppose I'd get bored.
about. Don't	453	See there's a lot to think about, getting them
get bored.	454	through their dinners, getting them outside,
Sorting them out	455	checking what they've eaten, sorting them out,
Making sure -	456	making sure they play nicely.
have to be	457	Yeah, and we have to think on our feet all the
'managed'	458	time. Like, you know that little J. there he
Think on feet	459	doesn't like his friends to know he can't cut up
Discreet.	460	his food so you have to be discreet. Then you
Individual	461	might know that that little'un is always telling
differences	462	tales, so you maybes deal with her different like
know children	463	to somebody else who has come with a genuine
'Balance'	464	tale. It's like, what is it when they balance
Crash	465	things?
Exhausting	466	D'you mean spinning plates at the same time?
Appreciate	467	That's it. And sometimes they crash to the floor.
small signs	468	It can be exhausting that's for sure.
Children like	469	Sometimes though, like when they say hello up
them - do	470	town, you think, 'Ar they must like us'.
they need	471	Aye and sometimes it's the ones you maybe have
this?	472	most trouble with.
'Getting through	473	We must be getting through to them in some way
to respond?	474	then.
Nerve?	475	Y'know when you were saying about it being a
When you think	476	challenging job? Well when I took it on I don't
- not have	477	think I even thought about that. It was just a
time or just	478	handy job and I must be honest I thought there
done?	479	wouldn't be too much to it. But there is more to it,
	480	when you think about it.
Do it all -	481	I think that's it, you do it, you do it all. And don't
not think	482	even think too much about it.
Accept as role		
Multi-task		

Language of emotion  
(love, awful)

Challenge

Skills needed  
patience.  
balanced view  
think on feet  
stamina  
discretion

Challenge and  
variety

Organisation

Individual differences  
- respect these

Know children

Work to be needed  
and to 'get through'  
to children

Limited time for  
reflection

Very busy role - do  
it all

Acceptance (of role)

Question each  
other

Uncertainty 483  
Natural - 484  
Intuition? 485  
Gut feeling 486  
Experience 487  
Learn from it 488  
Teachers don't 489  
know or don't 490  
say. Testing 491  
idea with others 492  
Nuisance - 493  
bring problems 494  
- blame? 495  
Only can't it 496  
smooth. 497  
Get paid - 498  
expectation 499  
put on a face 500  
- effort. Why 501  
need to please 502  
teachers? 503  
Have choice 504  
know what's 505  
effective. 506

I don't know, I think we do. Like when we talk amongst ourselves.  
Aye but I think a lot of it we do, natural like, without thinking about it. A lot of it is gut feeling.  
Experience too, you know what works and what doesn't.  
I don't think the teachers see it like though.  
How do you mean?  
Well I don't think they know how hard it can be for us, or if they do they never say.  
No, I don't think they appreciate us. I think sometimes they must think we're just a nuisance because we just bring problems to them.  
Aye I don't think they're too interested in what goes on at lunchtime, as long as it all goes smoothly.  
But then that's what we get paid for isn't it?  
Aye and one of the challenges is to try to seem happy cos they don't need to look at our miserable faces every day.  
Sometimes you have to paint on the smile.  
But it works doesn't it? If you smile and seem happy they seem to do the same back sometimes don't they?  
We could always go somewhere else if we wanted to, if it got that bad.

509 Do you see it as a stepping-stone to another  
510 kind of career?

Funny - unexpected? 511  
'done it hands 512  
down' - esteem 513  
I'm good. 514  
Like everything 515  
else not on 516  
paper - frustrated 517  
Proud of self. 518  
Know own 519  
skills 520  
Unsure - wanting 521  
others to, 522  
support. 523

Well it's funny cos I have. Cos there was a nursery here once and there was a meeting going on and they needed a crèche and of course I could have done it hands down, but like everything else it wasn't on paper and Mrs H said to us, 'I don't know why you haven't gone on an NVQ to get this, you could do it', so hence I went to college and I've got my Level 2 and now I'm going for a Level 3.  
I thought well I could have done it but there was nothing on paper.  
I don't know if it will help me to go onto anything else.

Intuition  
Experience  
Learning from  
experience

Unappreciated

Blame / responsibility

We - belonging -  
Group identity  
Acceptance - paid  
it.

Acting out a role  
Need to please teachers  
Teachers don't think  
about role.

Have choice (false  
belief?)

Belief in own skills  
Lack of formal  
qualification

Personal  
 restrictions 524 I couldn't have done anything when the kids were  
 525 younger.  
 526 I didn't know the opportunities to go to college  
 Unsure wanting 527 and things. I suppose anybody can go. Can they?  
 others to confirm 528 Yeah. Course you can.  
 Wanting more 529 It's like you, you've still got M. so once he's up  
 Convenience 530 you can. Yeah, but with him here now, it fits in  
 Aspirations 531 nicely.  
 Valuable 532 You've got experience through working here,  
 experience 533 which is valuable.  
 534 Working with kids.  
 535 I don't really want a career as such. I just want a  
 Handy, can do 536 job that's handy, that I can manage and doesn't  
 and keep 537 drive me mad.  
 same. 538 I think I've come on since I starting doing this. To  
 Have developed 539 be honest if I can manage this lot I can manage  
 'this lot' 540 just about any sort of a job. Working in a class as  
 Challenge can 541 an assistant well it'd be dead easy after this.  
 do anything 542 **Why did you think it would be easier?**  
 Comparison 543 For a start off I wouldn't be the one with the  
 - other easy 544 responsibility, not like we are on the playground.  
 Responsibility 545 I think as well the kids know what to do in the  
 playground 546 class. They sort of know what is acceptable and  
 - overwork? 547 what isn't.  
 Children know 548 Aye you're right there, on the playground it can  
 class rules 549 be every man for himself and everything goes.  
 Freedom of 550 There's more time as well, they're not rushing  
 playground - 551 through to get everybody in and out the dinner  
 work 552 hall.  
 Rush of time 553 I don't think the teachers have any idea what it's  
 Teachers don't 554 really like for us out there.  
 understand 555 I don't know, cos they go out of a playtime.  
 Ground, butterfly 556 Yeah but that's shorter and they don't have the  
 selfish, anything 557 same pressures as us.  
 acceptable 558 What pressures?  
 Pressures. Lots 559 Well y'know, the lining up, coming into the hall,  
 of practical 560 eating quickly, tidying up and getting them out again.  
 tasks. 561 It's all like 'go, go, go'. It's a military exercise  
 Military exercise 562 really.  
 Sussed. 563 I know but we've got that sussed really haven't  
 Children know 564 we? And the children know what to do.  
 Routines, 565  
 organisation? 566  
 'We're' 567

Personal circumstances  
 debate

Want more -  
 aspirations (not all)

Experience - with  
 children

Convenience

Manageable

Responsibility

Freedom of playground  
 (rules / culture different)  
 butterfly

Organisation - pressure

Teachers don't know  
 (Teacher ignorance)

We - belonging

Recognising/valuing 'smooth'	565	I think it's fairly smooth now.	Skilled at organising
They made it	566	That's because we've made it like that.	Different views to teacher
like that	567	I don't think I'd like to be in a class with a teacher in charge. I couldn't keep my mouth shut. There's some things I see teachers doing that I think, 'I wouldn't like her to talk to my lad like that'.	Critical
Teacher in charge	568	But I think you'd work it out. Like we do here.	
- what does she	569	Not all of us are the same but that doesn't matter.	
say about view	570	We know one another. It's like I know if I needed help with, oh I don't know, help with D., I'd go to S. because she knows how to handle him but I don't. You get to know like, what we can all do.	Group identity and support
of teachers?	571	<b>What do you think makes an effective lunchtime supervisor?</b>	
Critical of teacher	572		
imply they	573		
know better	574		
Team work it	575		
out. Individual	576		
differences.	577		
Support each other. Can say	578		
of each other			
Like children -	579	Well it helps to like the children. Doesn't it?	Like children
seek confirmation	580	It's no good if you don't like children.	
	581	No good.	
No good - not	582	We had a girl here once and we had to let her go,	Be different to children - know boundaries
like them	583	she was not good at all. She was a relief but she was	
Adult needs to	584	like one of the children. I had to pick her up. She	
know boundaries	585	didn't know the boundaries. If there was an	
	586	incident outside and it carried on inside she would	
Well, you know -	587	run after them. Well you know you don't run	Role model
still, knowledge	588	down the corridor, cos you're trying to set an	
Set example	589	example and she would run and if the child	
Different to	590	shouted, she shouted as loud as the child. And you	
children. Role	591	thought, 'Oh you're dealing with two children	
model.	592	here' and I thought this can't, y'know, go on.	
	593	<b>You've said a couple of things there about an effective supervisor - setting an example, boundaries and about not shouting above the children. Can you say a bit more about an effective supervisor?</b>	
	594		
	595		
	596		
	597		
Feel	598	You've got to feel like it.	Get instinct
Get			
instinct	599	<b>What do you mean by that?</b>	
	600		
Confidence	601	Well, be confident. Know that you're in charge and that you know what you're doing. It'd be no	Confidence in charge
In charge			
Know what you're doing.			

11

Communicate this to children	602	good if the kids thought you didn't know what you were doing, even if you don't really.	Act out role (persona)
- ask it	603		
) Persona	604	It's like I was saying before, a lot of it is gut feeling. You do what feels right.	Gut feels right
Feeling	605		
Gut feeling			
Ask articulate	606	Go on.	
Like children	607	And we've said about liking children.	
Understand them. Praise them.	608	You have to know about how to praise them. It's no good saying, 'Good Lad' if you don't mean it because they're not daft, they can see right through you.	know children - how to praise
Children not daft. See through you.	610		Children know - can read situation and show
Children understand adults.	611	You have to watch as well cos some of them don't like to be praised in front of their mates. It's not big is it?	Watch (visual)
Biggest - knowing children	612	I think the biggest thing is probably knowing the children. That's one of the biggest things that the reliefs have, they don't like the children and they don't know them. It's a really difficult thing. You need to be here for a long time.	Familiar with child and context
Familiar with children (school)	613		
Status of senior play us off	614	They all know that I'm in charge, so to speak, so what they do is they wind these lot up, but with me they don't. They do play us off against each other.	Team
One step ahead	615	But we know that so we're one step ahead really.	Communication senior status
Thinking ahead	616	That's something, about thinking ahead of them and being a team. Communicating with one another. I think that's why we work so well. We do work as a team. I think we're quite a good team.	Think ahead - anticipate children
Being a team	617		Esteem of team
Communication	618	Some of them look and say, 'Oh you've got a man dinner lady'. Well dinner person, so to speak.	
A good team	619	But it has its benefits doesn't it? When there's incidents in the boys toilets, especially in the junior end, and different things.	Gender of supervisor practical benefit and role model
Esteem of team	620	Well I think that some of these kids don't know what it is to have a man that can be quiet and civilised and not fang and blinding every time he opens his mouth. I don't think it does them any harm to see that.	Children's experience - assumptions
Benefits of male.	621		
	622		
	623		
Children's experience	624		
Role model	625		
	626		
	627		
	628		
	629		
	630		
	631		
	632		
	633		
	634		
	635		
	636		
	637		
	638		

	639	<b>What other skills do you think a good supervisor would have?</b>
	640	
Codology	641	We have what you might call 'codology'. Yeah.
Humour	642	Cold water on a bump. 'Hurt your leg? Oh you've
Attention	643	got one that still works'. All of those kind of
	644	things. They think they're getting attention.
	645	Cos we do say sometimes, like if there's a
	646	bleeding leg, 'Oh Mrs H. Look at that. Will you
Care for children	647	go the kitchen and get a knife, to cut the leg off'.
Humour -	648	And they stop crying and laugh.
shared	649	So, it's a bit humour really.
Shared understanding	650	They relate to you. They know you're not a
of content?	651	teacher as such and they can talk to you. And
Relate to	652	you'll listen to them. You're there to listen.
supervisors	653	You're a referee, a mum and a doctor and an
Listener	654	instigator. You're all these kind of things. You
Multi-skilled	655	think about it there's a lot of trades mixed in
Have to do so	656	there.
much - be so	657	I think it's quite important to be different to the
much	658	teachers. They have to maintain a little more
Different to	659	distance from the children. It's nice though that
teachers - not	660	they can approach us if there is any kind of
as distance	661	problem.
Nice they can	662	So you've got to be very versatile haven't you?
approach	663	You have, definitely.
Any problems -	664	And use different skills with different children as
there for children	665	well.
Versatile - firm	666	I think we've got to be patient and understanding.
belief	667	You were saying before about knowing the
Individual	668	children, and we do need to, we need to be
differences	669	sensitive to how different they are and know how
Patient and	670	to be with them.
understanding	671	One thing you have to do is respect them. They're
Sensitive.	672	not all the same and you have to accept them as
Respect	673	they are.
	674	That's right. We can't bring our own ideas in,
Individuals	675	about family life and such, cos some of them are
Acceptance	676	very different to us and we shouldn't judge them.
	677	No, it's like we always have our tea together on a
Not judgemental	678	night but a lot of them don't. They might sit with
	679	a tray in front of the telly, but that doesn't make
Assumptions about	680	them bad or anything.
family life?		
Just different		

Act a role

Humour - shared

Childrens need  
for attention.

Shared understanding  
of role

Skills  
Listen Patience,  
Understanding  
Let to do and to

Different to teachers  
(relationships)

Approachable,  
supportive

Versable

Sensitive

Respect for child

Acceptance of  
individuals

Non-judgemental  
(is this inconsistent?)

Assumptions made  
(family life)

Unsure?		
Stand back	681	I know it sounds a bit daft, but I think a good
weigh up - know	682	supervisor can sort of stand back and weigh
What's	683	everything up.
going on.	684	How do you mean?
'Think' - not have	685	Well think about it, we have all these things to do,
chance usually?		everything to deal with, and we've got to have a
Lots to do	686	handle on what's going on everywhere and know
Be aware	687	how to handle it all. We can't just rush in like a
Take time to	688	headless chicken. You've got to think all the time.
think	689	It's the quieter ones I worry about sometimes.
Worry - emotion	690	D'you know there's some children I hardly pass
Quicker children	691	the time of day with and others who are always
Straying - disorganised	692	there.
	693	But maybes that's all they need. Maybes they
Childrens need	694	don't want to have a chat with us.
Individual difference	695	No, I know, but what if they wanted to but don't
Acceptance	696	know how to, or can't get to us because there's
Availability.	697	others hogging all our time?
Assuming children	698	Well that's when we've to make ourselves
should need	699	available isn't it? It's why we walk around. And
supervisor?	700	we get to know them mostly, I think. We can keep
Kenas children	701	an eye on things.
Eye on	702	
Versatile		
Need to think-	703	<b>What do you think makes a good lunchtime?</b>
plan.		
Combination	704	It's a combination of things.
of factors.	705	The weather.
Weather	706	When you're completely bored because nothings
Not needed	707	happened. That's when you know it's been a good
Do they want to	708	lunchtime.
be needed?	709	See if it's windy, they're a nightmare aren't they?
Space is good	710	It's lovely when they can get on that big field.
	711	When they can get on that bank.
Choice, space	712	They are gifted here with all that space and that
spread out	713	y'know. They can get themselves away and play
(confinement an	714	football on that bank. Different things.
issue?)	715	It is frustrating that they have parts of the
Frustration.	716	playground that are perfect for them but they're
(Children don't	717	not allowed to go in. Like the bushes and things
appreciate?)	718	like that. It's a wonderful playing area where they
Boundaries restrict	719	can do things. Things they couldn't do on the flat
	720	parts. Sometimes I think they should get parents
Responsibility for	721	to sign something to say if they have played in the
safety		
Absence of problem		
= good lunchtime		

Reflective but  
linked opposition

Emotion - worry  
(quiet children)

Individual problems  
(quiet children)  
but accept this

Need to be needed

Availability.

Forward planning

Visual

Need to resolve  
difficulties  
Good planning = not  
needed

Space  
Choice

Emotion - frustration  
Children don't approve

Responsibility for safe

Restrictions on children  
play



Blame, fault	722	bushes and they've poked their eye out, it's not
safety <sup>conflict</sup>	723	our fault.
Don't parents		
) Need to	724	You can't see them in there though, that's the only
see	725	thing though.
	726	And it's what's in there cos there is other people
Safety	727	in there of a night.
Things not in	728	They have been but not so much now.
their control	729	Bottles, cans and things.
Fear, protection	730	There were fences.
	731	<b>Getting back to a good lunchtime.</b>
Good - see them	732	It's a good lunchtime when you can see them all and
all know	733	you know what they are doing.
what they're	734	When they are out there playing and we look and
doing	735	say, 'Is that what the time is?', because we haven't
knowing / seeing	736	done nothing, cos we're not needed. And this is
Needed	737	really a good lunchtime because we haven't been
children	738	needed because really the children have
entertain selves	739	entertained themselves and they're playing, no
No arguing	740	arguing, so that's a good lunchtime.
children's independence	741	It's noticeable from being here for some time,
	742	when the school was a lot bigger, there's far less
Fewer children	743	accidents and incidents now. Although there lots
(crawls?)	744	of space I think it was probably too many
	745	children.
Think (don't	746	When you think though the bell goes and we say
usually?)	747	go on out and enjoy yourselves. And they come
Reflect on what's	748	out, to what, I mean really what is there?
on offer	749	But they don't need much. Like we said before,
Opportunities	750	they can make a hole in the ground into something
Creativity	751	magical if they wanted to.
Imagination	752	It'd be better if they knew how to play and how to
Basics of play	753	share things.
Magical	754	Oh there's always arguments over stuff like that.
Don't know how	755	It's good when we've got the time to talk and
to play, share	756	praise the children.
When we have	757	It makes a difference, I think, when the teachers
time - so don't	758	are interested. When we worked with a class if I
Talk / praise	759	took somebody in to say they'd had a good
Teachers make	760	lunchtime, or a bad one, whatever the case may
difference - but	761	be, if the teacher listened and said the right things
not interested?	762	it looked better. It looked to the children like we
If teacher listens		
If said right		
things		
Teachers not doing		
it right		

Safety - blame

Conflict with  
parents

Visual

Visual - need  
see

knowing - need  
know

Needing - being ne.

Space

Reflecting

Opportunities /  
facilities for play

Play  
Creativity, imagination  
Magic of play  
Limits to this

Supervision time in

Teachers lack of  
interest / involvement  
support

Work together - better - make a difference	763 764	were working together and sometimes it did make a difference.	Teachers / supervisors working together is better
	765	But we don't seem to get the chance to do too much of that do we?	
No chance	766	No, not really, it's us on our own.	Lonely team
On own - lonely unsupported?	767 768	That's one of the biggest bug bears that I have, this lack of communication between us and the	Sense of being unsupported
Communication - bug bear	769 770	teachers. I mean we don't even feel comfortable going into the staffroom for a cuppa.	Communication
Uncomfortable	771	No, even though they said we could, but they	
Not belonging - their perception	772 773	all look at you like you shouldn't be there.	
Not part of staff (staffed)	774 775	Well it's because we're not really treated as part of the staff, are we? We just come in, do the hour, and go out.	Not part of staff (inconsistent)
Opinion not sought, or anything	776 777	No, they don't ask us about what systems work at lunchtime or anything.	Opinion not sought
Not informed	778 779	They don't even tell us when they've changed something that we should know.	Not involved
Just get on with it. Do own things	780 781 782	So's we just get on with it and do our own things really.	Lack of guidance autonomy
Question selves	783 784	So I suppose they could moan about us not telling them anything.	
Head and teacher responsibility Power / status?	785 786	Aye but I think that should come from the Head and the staff really. They should try to involve us more. We're on the same team for goodness sake.	Involvement - power, status
Goodness sake - anger, frustration	787 788	But we're tried it haven't we, countless times, and the teachers, they just want us to keep things calm at lunchtime and that's it.	Emotion - anger, frustration, fed up, day purpose of lunchtime calm (or expectation)
We've tried Teachers just want calm.	789 790		
	791	<b>How do you feel after a good day at work?</b>	
Smile	792	Well I leave here with a smile.	Stamina
Tiring	793	I'm not as tired really. Sometimes I get tired	Responsibility
Have to sort - responsibility	794	having to sort out silly little arguments.	
Fed up with children	795 796	I get fed up with kids who won't do as they're told.	Expectations of children
Want cooperation, compliance	797	<b>But what about when it's been a good day?</b>	Non-compliance
Laughter	798	We have a bit of a laugh don't we? Things that	Emotion - laugh
Joy of children	799	kids have done or said.	
Plan treats - reward	800	I tell you what we do as well. When it's been	Thinking ahead, planning
Do for children	801	good we plan to do something nice for the kids. I	

	802	don't know, like maybe play a chase game with	
Just happens	803	them the next day.	
	804	We don't always talk about that it just sort of	Spontaneity
	805	happens.	
Days often fine	806	Actually there are lots of times when the day is	
One thing may	807	fine. It's not often that the whole day is awful. It	Variation but general
spoil	808	might just be one thing in the day that's spoilt	fine
	809	things a bit.	
Agreement	810	I agree with you there. It's mostly okay.	Stamina
Mostly okay	811	It's been good when I'm exhausted from playing	Involve in play - child
Exhausted	812	with them. It's like I was saying before, when we	direct
Time to listen /	813	have the time to listen and chat to them and	Nature - listen
chat / play	814	maybe throw a few balls or turn the skipping rope	chat
	815	for them.	Limited time
	816	<b>We've talked a little about what you do. Your</b>	
	817	<b>job title is 'Lunchtime Supervisor' and</b>	
	818	<b>essentially your job is about supervision. What</b>	
	819	<b>does the word 'supervision' mean to you?</b>	
Watching	820	Well supervising the children, watching the	Usual, eye
Eye on	821	children. Keeping an eye on them, generally but	Moderate
Watchful	822	not too much. Just being watchful I suppose.	this
Not too much	823	You've got to give them space. You can't like be	Space
children need	824	over them all the time. It's not like we're	
freedom, space	825	patrolling around looking for trouble to sort out.	
Not patrolling	826	They have things they need to do and routines,	Routines (organisation)
or looking for	827	like when they go to eat, going to the toilet, going	
problems to sort	828	out to play and making sure they put their coats	
Routines	829	on and that sort of thing. We're watching them do	Obligations (learning)
Ensuring	830	them. Ensuring that they do things they have to	
Things they have	831	do.	
to do.	832	It's about facilitating them. Different things for	Facilitating
Facilitating	833	different ages.	Age differences
Differences in	834	Junior end you say to them put your coat on cos	
age	835	it's cold they're old enough to know whether	
Making sure	836	they're cold or not. The little ones you're doing	
Facilitating	837	zips making sure that they have.	Nurturing
Nurturing	838	There's two aspects really. Making sure, like you	
Things - learners	839	said, facilitating them getting their lunch, but then	
	840	nurturing them 'make sure you've got your coat	
	841	on, it's cold'.	
Not checking	842	It's not about checking behaviour and telling kids	
or telling at			
the time.			

Nurturing	843	off. Well some of it is. But you need to do that
Parenting	844	nurturing, like we do here. It's just like parenting.
) Younger	845	Especially with the little ones. I extend it cos at
children	846	the end of the day they're just individual people
	847	but they are somebody's children and that's all
Look up to	848	they are, children, they look up to you and I
Bless them	849	always think, 'bless them'.
Power/status	850	Some of the little ones can't do their shoes laces
Care for other	851	yet. And they do have problems with zips. Well
children.	852	some of them are just 4. They always come to you
Needing	853	don't they? 'Can you zip my coat up?'
Practical help	854	The funniest thing. I live on the estate and in the
- self care	855	summer holidays I can just be walking down the
Needing	856	street and, 'Mrs S will you fasten my shoe laces
Can't get	857	please?, and I say, 'I'm off you know'. Little A.
away from	858	was sat with her mother in the pub. Eating like.
it.	859	She was with her mother, and she tapped me
Expectations of	860	on the shoulder and said, 'Mrs J. would you cut up
children	861	my steak?' Her mum said, 'Are you gonna?' and I
Thrive on it	862	said, 'Yeah'. You can't get away from it.
Love it	863	I thrive on that. I love it.
Seeking approval	864	You just love them needing you don't you?
Needing	865	I suppose I do really, it's the mother in me.
Mother role	866	On one day a lad had cut his finger and I didn't
Obviously - I know	867	bring him in, cos obviously you don't take them
Recognising boundaries	868	in your house, but I said to stay there and sat him
	869	on the step and got a plaster and a tissue and set
	870	him on his way. The next day his mother said
	871	'Thank you very much', but you never switch off.
Status of	872	You're still that dinner lady.
supervisor		
Identity	873	<b>You mentioned about facilitating them,</b>
	874	<b>different things for different ages. Can you say</b>
	875	<b>a little more about that?</b>
Flexibility	876	I don't know really. Well it's kind of being
Individual	877	different with them.
differences	878	With the older ones see we can have some banter
Banter	879	with them and try to get them to sort out their own
Age	880	little problems.
Sort own problems	881	Yeah we might say, 'Well if he won't share the
Solution searching	882	ball with you, what could you do instead?' But
More help	883	with the little ones you have to suggest things to
with younger		

Nurturing  
Parenting  
Age differences  
Role model  
Power of supervisor  
Practical help  
Needing to be needed

Love it

Nurturing  
Knowing boundaries

Identity

Flexibility

Age differences

Facilitating independence  
and solution

Gender/Tease	884	them.
Humour	885	Aye and the banter is different, you can't tease
	886	them because they mightn't understand you're
Individual	887	just having a laugh.
difference	888	I tease them.
	889	Yeah but it's different with them isn't it?
Potential of	890	It is, yeah.
child/mystery	891	For me it's about their potential. I like to think of
Opportunity	892	them as the half full glass. You never know how
See if stand	893	they're going to turn out.
back, not too	894	Sometimes our job is about setting things up and
involved.	895	knowing when to stand back and not get too
Skill to know	896	involved. We had one that worked here and she
Ad all can speak	897	would always get right involved in the game and
play	898	the kids maybe didn't want to play it the way she
Responsibility to	899	did and it spoilt it for them.
let them be	900	You need to let them be independent don't you?
independent.	901	With the little ones you might be able to show
Individual	902	them more, different games and that. And you can
differences - age	903	encourage them to play with one another. When
Encourage	904	they're older they're not that interested in games
Leave them to	905	and you can't really help them to pick their
it	906	friends. You have to leave them to it more.
Not playing as	907	I think that's the problem though, I mean they're
used to -	908	only like, what 9, 10, 11, and they're not playing
romantic view	909	like they used to, but they're still just kids.
Don't know how	910	They don't know how to.
to	911	No, I think they grow up too quickly now.
Grow up too	912	Have you noticed though when we get a game
quickly.	913	going they love it?
We get game -	914	For a short while.
they love it	915	I think though that we talk a lot more to them and
- appreciated	916	sometimes they come to us to test something out.
Share lived	917	How d'you mean?
Test out with	918	Well they might tell us something that one of their
superiors	919	mates did last night and they watch for our
Different to a	920	reaction like. That's the sort of thing they
teacher relationship	921	wouldn't tell a teacher.
	922	You wouldn't believe some of the things that we
Special place in	923	get to hear.
word of child	924	We have to kinda, listen and advise them, sort of
Listen to them?	925	guide them.
Advise	926	Well it goes back to being a sort of parent doesn't
Guide		
Parent		
them/love		

Relationships  
Humour - shared  
understanding

Potential of child

Understanding of  
play and how to  
support  
Able to step back

Children's independence

Not knowing how  
to play

Role model - testing  
out relationship

(Unique)  
Special place in word  
of child (Christmas was)

Guidance

Confirming with each other	927	it?	Need to confirm with each other.
	928	<b>You said before that you're a bit like a</b>	
	929	<b>mother/father figure. In what ways are you</b>	
	930	<b>different from that mother/father figure?</b>	
Parents don't listen - they do. Parents more loving, Not so close know better? Limits of job protection	931	Probably listen a bit more. You're not as loving.	Knowing children - more balanced perspective
	932	You're not as closely connected. You know that	
	933	they're not the little angel all of the time. You	
	934	know that little so and so.	
	935	Cos they're not your child, you're not so	Protection of children
	936	protective. We're protective of them but at the	
	937	end of the day we're doing a job. It's a job so	
	938	you can be severe too.	
Attached Mutual Some conflict with - will explain	939	You get attached to some children. Well it's	Mutual attachment
	940	mutual isn't it? You find children attach to you as	
	941	well. There are some that you can't take to and I	
Taking responsibility for relationship	942	try. I don't know what it is but I look at some and	Responsible for relationship
	943	think 'I can't get away with you'.	
	944	For all the years I've worked here I can't say that.	
	945	No, they're maybe is one or two.	
	946	There's naughty ones, and I know they're naughty,	Normality of childhood behaviour
	947	but I keep telling myself that at the end of the day	
Naughty Expecting of children	948	they are just children.	
	949	I know what you mean, cos I'm the same there are	
	950	one or two that I can't get on with. And it's not	
Can't explain	951	that they're naughty or they're not naughty. I	Willingness to reflect (but limited time for this)
Reflecting	952	can't even pin down what it is. Just one or two	
	953	<b>What about the teacher role? How are you</b>	
	954	<b>different to a teacher?</b>	
Teacher, distant they're not. Avoid physical authoritarian	955	I don't think that we need to be quite as distant.	Unique relationship - different to teacher
	956	The teachers have to maintain some distance	
Nurturing	957	and avoid physical contact. They have to be more	Nurturing
Leeway	958	authoritarian whereas we have to be more, be a	
Fun	959	little more, we can be more nurturing.	Fun
	960	Have more leeway.	
	961	More fun.	
	962	They can have fun at lunchtime.	Use judgement
Inconsistent? Use judgement	963	If they're not creating or drawing blood we can	
	964	say 'don't do it again' or we can read the riot act.	Teacher restrictions
Teacher has to be consistent. Can't use judgement?	965	The teacher has to take the line every time.	

Assume children thinking - they know	966	The kids think, 'Oh we're going to get fed and go outside' so we're not there to tell them off, so to speak, we're just there.	know children (or make assumptions about their thinking)
	967		
	968		
lunchtime is positive	969	They associate us with that nice time of being fed and playing.	Positive view of lunchtime
	970		
Respect problems	971	But it can cause problems like they might not respect us the same. Might not listen as well.	Respect issues
Not listen	972		
Not behave as well?	973	Might not behave as well for us as they do for their teachers.	
	974		
Remind children of adult role	975	It has to be reinforced that we are adults and they have to treat us like adults as well. One or two of them needs reminding of that. It's not a major problem. The ones that cause problems for us are a problem for their teachers as well.	
	976		
Children problem for teachers too	977		
	978		
	979		
	980	Yeah probably.	
Bluff - firm backing?	981	I would imagine so.	
	982	You have to bluff your way a bit. Definitely.	Act a role
	983	<b>Do you have any concerns about your role at school?</b>	
Defensive	984		
Initially no concerns - not really	985	No, not really.	Frustration
	986		
Frustration	987	I don't know really sometimes I get frustrated that the teachers say we're in charge at lunchtime but then they make up the rules as they go along. Like we say, 'Not on the grass today' but Mr M. might say yes to some. I mean if it's us that's there to pick up the pieces well we should be left to it really.	Responsibility confusion (power and status!) Conflict
Teachers who is in charge	988		
Teacher inconsistent	989		
They have to pick up pieces	990		
	991		
	992		
Cross	993	See now I get cross when we ask kids to apologise and they maybe say sorry, but you know they don't mean it. So what's the point? It's like we have to go through this. The children knows it, we know it and we all know it doesn't make any difference. So why do we bother?	Cross
Shared understanding	994		
Pick out - learn from it in time	995		
	996		
Conflict with teachers	997		
	998		
	999	I think differently to you on that. I think they have to learn what they should do even if they don't mean it.	Shared understanding of what is expected
Learning	1000		
	1001		
Teaching	1002	We're teaching them all sorts really aren't we?	Reflecting - challenging each other
	1003		
Need to be there		Good job we're here.	Learning social skills
			Need to be there

Say a lot on this	1004	Are there any particular barriers that make it	
	1005	harder for you to do your job well?	
	1006	If we've got a problem we know that it just	
Can seek support	1007	doesn't stay with us we can take it along.	If need to, can seek support like this man, see
Poor follow up.	1008	I would still say the real problem is that the	
Others responsible	1009	children, who are real problems, are not	Others responsible
	1010	effectively dealt with. It's not dealt with high	
High enough - status hierarchy	1011	enough. It's not just that they are a problem for us	
	1012	to deal with. Once we refer things up, a couple of	
Frustrated	1013	times. We just get faced with the same problems	
Perpetual	1014	time after time. We just wonder if anything's been	Take account of wider context
	1015	done. I think this is probably all to do with	
Funding issues	1016	Statementing and lack of finance, the education	
Not school - trying to be reasonable.	1017	authority and that sort of thing rather than	Frustration
Bigger picture wider context	1018	anything that is internal to the school.	
	1019	The ones that are naughty, like you say, they go to	
Cycle	1020	Mrs H. and nothing gets done. They're back in the	Limits to what can be done.
Children know	1021	playground. The cycle repeats itself. They know	Children know this
Makes job harder	1022	nothings gonna happen. It's not making our job	
	1023	easier.	
	1024	The boy who was excluded, it's been going on for	
Baron Cohen - other kids feeling	1025	months and months and it was obviously a	They know problems.
	1026	problem. He was on one to one at one stage at	
We have to deal with it.	1027	lunchtime. His behaviour has just got worse and it's	
	1028	more and more difficult.	
Individuals - impact	1029	It's individuals that cause problems and that	Impact of individual
	1030	definitely impacts on how well we can do our job	
Eye	1031	for the other kids. If we're having to sort J. out cos	
	1032	he's having a one it means we can't keep the	Visual (eye)
	1033	same eye on the others.	
	1034	I think there are two types of problem children in	
	1035	that respect, one is really problematically, the	
Individuals - isolated?	1036	other children won't associate with them at all.	
	1037	They don't like them around. It's individual	
	1038	problems so it doesn't impact on the others really,	Issue of leaders - poor role model
	1039	but occasionally there are others who are, who	
Leaders enormous problems	1040	become leaders, and they cause enormous	Push boundaries (testing)
Role models	1041	problems. Sometimes if they see this child getting	
	1042	away with something they have a little go at it to	
Visual language	1043	see how far they can push the boundaries. So they	Visual language
	1044	do a little test. And you think, 'Eye eye' so you	
Have to watch - be aware of handle carefully	1045	watch it but you don't push the issue. But they do	Sensitive management



We

? Report on - 1046 have a go.  
 shift responsibility 1047 When you report things on. We don't get to hear  
 , Accepting? 1048 what's happened. Not all the time.  
 1049 I don't think I ever do.  
 Not involved 1050 I do, I think with being senior.  
 Communication 1051 We write it in that book. We've got a book. And  
 1052 the end of every month, cos it's the classes, so if  
 Feel something 1053 anyone has been naughty we write it down and at  
 is done. 1054 the end of the month it goes to Mrs H. who reads  
 1055 through it and signs it to say she read it and if  
 1056 there's one particular person in that book she can  
 1057 note down she monitoring it all you see. It doesn't  
 1058 get reported back to us but she is monitoring it.  
 Presume - don't 1059 We presume she's monitoring it but we don't  
 know 1060 know.  
 1061 Well we have the level system but we get no  
 Behaviour system 1062 feedback.  
 but no feedback 1063 I thought that'd stopped, the levels. Is it still  
 1064 ongoing is it?  
 Unsure of system 1065 Yeah, it should be.  
 1066 I thought it had stopped.  
 Communication 1067 Sounds like communication is a problem, just like  
 1068 we've said before.  
 1069 Look that's the levels there (pointing to a wall  
 'Usually' - so not 1070 display). At 5 you get a letter sent home. And  
 always inconsistent 1071 then after you get a letter sent home, well they get  
 1072 excluded for a couple of days. Usually. If it's  
 1073 twice.  
 'Very' interesting 1074 It's interesting that we don't know what's  
 1075 happening about things. Not getting to hear about  
 Not hearing or 1076 things.  
 being involved. 1077 That's a barrier to us doing our job well isn't it?  
 Seeking support 1078 We moan about it often enough so it must be the  
 Moan - no change 1079 main problem we have.  
 Main problem 1080  
 Communication 1081

**Are you involved in any school reward systems for the children?**

1082 We sometimes give them lunchtime stickers  
 1083 if they've behaved or eaten their lunch.  
 'Sometimes' - 1084 I gave a special mention in assembly. Some girls,  
 behave - vague 1085 with D being off. 5 girls helped all week, in the  
 Specific, isolated 1086 dining room, putting the chairs up cos we had a  
 example.  
 Need help to 1086 do all jobs  
 What does  
 behaved mean?

We

Communication poor

Acceptance (or lack  
 of challenge) of the

Communication issue  
 not knowing systems

Limited impact  
 of moaning (who to:  
 Voice?)

Inconsistent reward  
 systems

Lots to do - need  
 help.

Had to ask	1087	member of staff down and they were really good
	1088	and I went and asked if we could and I got them a
	1089	special mention.
	1090	One of the things we have done is get assigned to
Relationships	1091	individual classes and I found that really useful.
children/teachers	1092	I don't think the rest of you did but I did. I was
	1093	with the Year 2 class and I think that worked well
More balanced	1094	cos I built up a relationship with that class teacher
Able to express	1095	and the class. In that sort of circumstance it was
individual opinion	1096	possible to bring out good points as well as bad
	1097	points.
Asking question of	1098	Yeah but you've got a class now, do you not find
each other	1099	you've got a good relationship with them?
Age difference	1100	I've got no relationship with them. It's a Year 5
	1101	class and they don't want to know. I'm friendly
	1102	with the teacher. It's a good class though.
Need to know	1103	We've swapped round to get to know more
more children	1104	children and so it's been hard to maintain the
Have to work	1105	relationships.
at relationships	1106	It's possible that those of us who had the infant
	1107	classes found it easier to work with them.
Age differences	1108	Around Easter I'll swap us around again so we get
Open to ideas (as	1109	to know more of the children.
possible)	1110	You know I'm not sure the children like that. I
I'll swap - status?	1111	don't know about the teachers either.
Consultation?	1112	I don't think the children notice any difference.
Consider what	1113	You told them about it. But I mean like you say,
others think	1114	we go to the teachers anyway so if they see us
Share information	1115	coming into the class, if there's been a problem
- problem	1116	like, the kids think, 'Oh no'.
Gender	1117	I don't know. It did help. When we had a wet
Not afraid of	1118	playtime I would always go into the Year 2 class
difficult class	1119	and I mean I think they were quite a difficult
Manage class	1120	class. There was a group of boys who I think were
better if have	1121	quite problematic. I think it made it a lot easier to
relationship	1122	manage the class having a relationship with them.
Can cause problems	1123	I don't know. I disagree with that cos times I think
Children wind	1124	they know how to wind us up, working us. They
them up	1125	get to know, the ones that you'd have a problem
Children get	1126	with. Which buttons to press. So that's why we
to know them	1127	need a change around.
Able to disagree		
with each other		

Not routinely  
involved in reward  
system

Relationships with  
children and teachers  
- Have to work at  
balanced view of  
children

Age differences

Reflective, openness  
to new ideas or  
change, able to  
debate amongst  
selves

Gender

Children read  
adults

1128 **Is there anything in particular that you think**  
 1129 **would help you to do your job more**  
 1130 **effectively?**

1131 Well we've said about communication. If that was  
 1132 improved it would make things easier.  
 1133 Sometimes if H. come to me, say if like J. got an  
 1134 incident, she'll come to me and I'll get whoever's  
 1135 been naughty to stay with me but it gets like I  
 1136 don't know who I'm reporting to.  
 1137 Lot of occasions like that. Mrs C, it's her that's in  
 1138 charge like at lunchtime, but often she's not in. It  
 1139 was actually Mrs L. on Friday, which we found  
 1140 out at going home time.  
 1141 So really and truly I think we need to get told. Or  
 1142 even me so I can tell the rest of the team.  
 1143 I think the teachers don't treat us any different.  
 1144 We are like part of the school. If somebody's  
 1145 being told off and it's, they say, 'Don't talk to  
 1146 Mrs P like that'. They do respect us, the teachers.  
 1147 The teachers think it's good cos they know us and  
 1148 chat to us. We get involved in everything with the  
 1149 teachers. If they have social events they ask us to  
 1150 go. We feel part of it. They are very open and  
 1151 approachable.  
 1152 They ask for our advice. They come, couple of  
 1153 lunchtimes. They say keep an eye on blah blah,  
 1154 they'll say they've had problems with so and so,  
 1155 an incident could happen. They don't ask us for  
 1156 our advice but they do approach us in different  
 1157 situations.  
 1158 If the lining up wasn't going well they mightn't  
 1159 ask us what we think would work well because  
 1160 they're better at getting the kids to line up than we  
 1161 are. They do work with us though. We blow the  
 1162 whistle but the teachers are more authoritarian,  
 1163 they have the authority, more than we do, to get  
 1164 the kids, especially the older ones.  
 1165 I've got a piece of paper and a pen in my pocket  
 1166 and I can lift this piece of paper out and I just  
 1167 have this paper out and I go, 'Right then, whose  
 1168 names is first?' and they go, 'Oh' and I don't even  
 1169 have to write anything down and they're away.

*Communication*  
*Not clear on hierarchy*  
*Happens lots*  
*Confusion*  
*Not informed*  
*Really and truly - heart felt?*  
*Inconsistency?*  
*Part of school*  
*Teachers respect them (so as it isn't like the rest of community)*  
*Part of it*  
*Open and approachable*  
*Ask for advice*  
*Eye on*  
*Don't ask for advice - inconsistent*  
*Teachers more skilled (line)*  
*Authoritarian*  
*Status*  
*When directly involved*  
*Age difference*  
*Acting*  
*Warning*  
*Children know you and what you'll do*  
*Just content*

*Communication*

*Emotion - really and truly*

*Part of school (unofficial view)*

*Usual*

*Advice not sought*

*Authority of teachers*

*Age difference*

*Shared understanding*  
*Acting a role*

Kidology.	1170	The paper goes back. It's going back to the	Acting a role
They know children	1171	kidology.	Power over children
Power - using back to conference	1172	What else do you think helps you to do your	
	1173	job well?	
Keep to word	1174	It's important to keep to your word.	Shared understand
Important.	1175	Definitely. If I get that paper out they have to	- honour your word
Understanding	1176	know I will do it. There are times when I do write	
between them and children.	1177	on that paper but yeah they know. I do stick to it.	
	1178	You have to. Sometimes I say, 'I'll have to talk to	
	1179	your teacher' and I'll say to the teacher, 'I just	Acting a role / Power
Like a game -	1180	want so and so to see me talking to you and we'll	
acting. Getting	1181	talk about the price of fish for two minutes', but	
one over the	1182	he sees. I might say, 'So and so has been naughty	
children?	1183	and we don't need to do anything more but I just	
	1184	want her to see that I am talking to you' and	
Children have to	1185	they've thought, 'She said she would talk and she	
believe you.	1186	did talk'.	
Be confident	1187	Consistency between us is good. We try but	Shared understand
you'll do what	1188	sometimes we don't always manage it because it's	- honour
you say.	1189	a big school and sometimes we're a yard or so	
Contributing. Take	1190	apart. We do check though. I'll see somebody	Team
effort.	1191	wandering off to one of the others and I'll go	Lonely
Always checking -	1192	across and say, 'Now I've said that was dealt with.	
aware of what's	1193	I've told so and so'.	
going on.	1194	But were we try to be, the same like, the teachers	
Teachers undermine	1195	might come along and say something different,	
Lonely just apart	1196	and that doesn't help does it?	
	1197	They know the ones as well. The children can tell	Children read adult
Children know -	1198	you which teacher will let them get away with	
learn adult	1199	something so they go and ask them. They're not	Respect for skills of
agenda	1200	daft.	children
Not daft - do	1201	Mind the children won't let anybody away with	
adults assume	1202	anything. I've seen somebody come to me and	
them to be.	1203	say, 'Blah blah has just hit me' and somebody else	
Supervisors don't	1204	comes up and says, 'Aye but Mr so and so just said	Children's culture -
underestimate	1205	it's dealt with', so they don't really let them away	Children moderate
them.	1206	with it anyway, but we usually just check with the	each other
Children moderate	1207	teacher.	
each other.	1208	We get time for a chat before lunch as well and at	Mutual team
'We'	1209	the end. We're always in about 10 minutes before	support
Talking to each	1210	we need to take the children in. We don't always	
other halves.			
Come in early -			
committed?			

general chit  
 chat 1211  
 business 1212  
 maintenance 1213  
 their 1214  
 relationships 1215  
 disappointed - 1216  
 meetings 1217  
 Head responsible 1218  
 Busy - don't conflict 1219  
 better her. Define 1220  
 Power status 1221  
 can challenge 1222  
 Talking to each 1223  
 other is good 1224  
 Recognise value 1225  
 of talking 1226  
 Aware of teacher 1227  
 demands 1228  
 They don't know 1229  
 - not informed 1230  
 Make it hard 1231  
 for them 1232  
 Confused 1233  
 Questioning 1234  
 Teachers don't 1235  
 think 1236  
 Status - nobody 1237  
 thinks it will 1238  
 affect them 1239  
 Do they not 1240  
 question - why not 1241  
 power / voice / status 1242  
 Put upon? 1243  
 1244  
 Not informed 1245  
 Taken for 1246  
 granted? 1247  
 Bit of a fog 1248  
 1249  
 Communication 1250  
 1251  
 Could be simple 1252  
 system 1253  
 Why haven't 1254  
 they suggested 1255  
 it.

talk about the children though. We have general  
 chitchat. But that's important too. We were going  
 to have a proper meeting like, every now and then  
 with the Head but that's never came off. No we  
 haven't had a meeting in a long time. We were  
 going to get one termly weren't we? Just to keep  
 any problems but we never.  
 I think I'll have to look up on that but that's the  
 Head as well y'see she's busy. Sometimes if there  
 is a teacher off she's teaching so it doesn't always  
 happen.  
 But it is good to talk.  
 One of the things, it's a slight tangent. But the  
 teachers aren't teaching five days a week, I mean  
 that does slightly impact on the way we work.  
 You mean their PPA time?  
 Yeah you think this is Mrs such and suches class  
 and you go over and it's either somebody whose  
 just been around or it's a supply in and doesn't  
 make for too much continuity in some respects.  
 It's probably just a bad consequence of this time.  
 I don't think the teachers will have thought about  
 that.  
 I shouldn't think anybody's thought about it.  
 It's swings and roundabouts cos they're going out  
 to do their planning and they need that time.  
 The awkward time is when they're lining up and  
 the end of playtime and you're waiting for the  
 teacher and you think 'Well who am I looking for  
 to take this class? Is it somebody covering, is it  
 maybe somebody who doesn't know they've got  
 to collect them?' Once it's down to one class I  
 usually take them.  
 Yeah I do.  
 You still wonder if the teacher's in the staff room  
 or in the classroom or on the way.  
 Often we're in a bit of a fog about things. Who do  
 we refer on to? Who's in charge? It's about  
 communication isn't it?  
 As far as knowing who is in charge. A piece of  
 paper 'Teacher in charge today is.' That's all, one  
 piece of paper stuck in the window.  
 It's because, it's deeper than that. If you've got

Work at Team  
 relationships  
 Communication  
 Emotion - disappointment  
 Power and status  
 Talk as a Team  
 Balanced view - dem  
 on Head and teachers  
 Continuity important  
 Teachers not thinking  
 of them / their role  
 Status - unimportant  
 they don't matter  
 Lack of voice  
 Communication poor  
 Lack of voice

Regretting of problems	1254	problems or it's the same issues again and again	
	1255	there isn't an awful lot of point in talking to	
No point	1256	somebody who's on for half a day because they	
	1257	haven't got any background to the issues and you	
Need to know children	1258	really want to be talking to somebody who knows.	Need to know children
	1259	A class teacher really. A supply teacher isn't	
Uninformed	1260	much use in that respect. I want to know who's in	
	1261	charge of the school if the boss is away. Is it that	
	1262	teacher or that teacher?	Communication
Annoyed	1263	Yeah I get annoyed sometimes if we're all in	
	1264	waiting and we bring the little ones up and the	
	1265	juniors just come by their selves. Sometimes you	Emotion - annoyed
Uninformed	1266	know that this certain class shouldn't be and	
Confusion	1267	nobody has told you that they are going	
	1268	swimming or to a pantomime, or certain things	Lack of voice
	1269	like that, and you're thinking, if they'd only said,	
if they'd only said - so easy so why didn't they?	1270	'We're in early tomorrow' we'd know. So you're	Emotion
	1271	kind of asking the children, 'Why are you in?' and	Top doe
	1272	they're, 'Cos we're whatever'. It's not the	
No child's fault - so who?	1273	children's fault but you've got yourself to top doe	
	1274	because there's all this going on.	
To top doe	1275	There's also the little bit of you thinking, 'Aye I	
Try it on - try system.	1276	believe, you'. Sometimes you do get them, they	
	1277	try it on. It's not that you're calling the kids liars,	
	1278	it's cos you don't know, cos they want their lunch	
Practical	1279	now and not in half an hour.	Practical chores
Emotional	1280	Yeah it's a lot of practical things.	
	1281	Emotional things, watch out for so and so, their	
Children tell you, not teachers	1282	pet rabbit died today. Sometimes, not always. The	Emotional support for child
	1283	children will say, not the teachers, but the other	
	1284	children do tell you. You don't make a fuss.	
know how to handle it - how far to go	1285	Unless they want you.	know boundaries - re: child/situation
	1286	You're on standby really if they want you, you're	
There if needed	1287	there and if they don't, you don't. You don't push	
	1288	the issue do you?	
Again, why not asking questions - present for this?	1289	<b>I'm sure there will be some children whose</b>	
	1290	<b>behaviour in school is of concern. Are you</b>	
Messages it gives if not told.	1291	<b>aware of the strategies that teaching staff are</b>	
	1292	<b>using?</b>	
Some teachers inform. (so not all)	1293	Well some tell you, they say, 'In class when he	Inconsistencies between staff (teachers, Teacher does it
	1294	misbehaves I'm putting him in time out for two	32 min. next

Consistency	1295	minutes I want you to do the same on the	
But doesn't	1296	playground so we're consistent'.	
own often	1297	I think that's happened once or twice. Usually	
	1298	they say, 'Blah blah is staying in cos he's missing	
	1299	his play' or, 'Can so and so stand by the wall for 5	
Told / directed	1300	minutes and then when he's been there for 5	
Not involved	1301	minutes let him go', but they don't generally	
	1302	involve us.	
	1303	When I was with Mrs E's class there were four	
	1304	boys who were a problem. We did discuss options	
Police - difficult	1305	like that but it was very difficult to kind of police	Lack of voice
to do	1306	it, to sort of say, 'You have time on your thinking'	
	1307	or whatever it was because it didn't really work.	
Teacher strategies	1308	It is difficult cos the class teacher has them in a	Space
don't work on	1309	confined space, fewer children, we've got them	Unique content
the playground	1310	out there and they could be anywhere. There's	
Different content	1311	loads of them but there's only 5 of us. It's difficult for	Them / us divide
only 5 of us	1312	us to do the same behaviour things, management	
with them?	1313	strategies like, as the teachers.	
	1314	We're not too bad.	
	1315	One of the problems is that the children don't	
Lack of respect	1316	respect us the same as they do the teachers.	Lack of respect /
Inferior in teacher	1317	Oh now I don't know I'd agree with that. I think	different respect
Different respect	1318	they respect us in a different way.	Relationship
	1319	Well you have to show respect to earn it back	
Have to earn	1320	don't you, so it's down to us.	
it.			
Relationship	1321	I don't think it's as simple as that. I think they can	
between them	1322	be quite rude to us sometimes, the way they talk	
and children	1323	and argue back. Sometimes they even ignore us	
blame, argue	1324	when we call them over but they wouldn't do that to	
ignore	1325	a teacher.	Respect from most
Wouldn't do	1326	It's just some of them though isn't it? Most of	fine.
to a teacher	1327	them are fine.	
Most are fine	1328	Even though it's a big space we can see incidents	Space
	1329	and we've got the Buddies now on going again.	Visual
Space	1330	They wear fluorescent green bibs so you can	
See incidents	1331	always see one of them.	
	1332	<b>What do they do?</b>	
Buddies - not	1333	It's not a job. We've told them they're out there,	Busy role - need
a job	1334	they're still playing football but if they see an	support.
Have to help	1335	incident, a little one crying and maybe one of us	
because they			
are so busy			

See of eyes 1336  
 1337  
 1338  
 Practical help 1339  
 1340  
 Involved children 1341  
 - worth better 1342  
 1343  
 1344  
 1345  
 "We" 1346  
 1347  
 1348  
 Likened to 1349  
 them - went  
 with them. 1350  
 1351  
 Best status of 1352  
 supervisor  
 Reward system 1353  
 Funnies - all get 1354  
 a go 1355  
 Important not 1356  
 to say the best 1357  
 1358  
 Often see 1359  
 Sixth sense with 1360  
 experience  
 1361  
 We know 1362  
 Can read 1363  
 children 1364  
 1365  
 An eye 1366  
 Watch  
 1367  
 Know children 1368  
 1369  
 Eye on  
 Can read signs 1370  
 Individuals are  
 problem  
 Expectations? 1371  
 Intuition 1372  
 1373  
 Presence 1374  
 Unspoken 1375  
 1376

isn't in that area to come and they, y'know, are  
 just another set of eyes. They help to collect the  
 equipment at the end, the balls and things. It is  
 actually working a lot better. It's the same ones  
 are on rota. It's set. We had a meeting, they used  
 to do it weekly that group and they decided they  
 didn't like the full week. It's too much. For a  
 child I suppose it's too much time. So we  
 decided we'd have a Monday Team and Tuesday  
 Team, so I've got five teams and they all do their  
 same day. And we find it's working a lot better.  
 Yeah we got the kids together and listened to  
 their opinion and went with them. Up to now  
 it's working. It's going well. I've done a  
 reward system cos it's up in the junior end. The  
 Buddy board and we're doing every month,  
 picking a team. I suppose they all get a go and  
 every month they'll get a certificate to say, they  
 were not the best cos we're not doing the best,  
 but to say they have helped more and their  
 certificate goes on the wall and they all get one  
 each.  
 We often see incidents.  
 Over the years we've developed a sixth sense.  
 We kind of know something is going on over  
 there. If they're all in a gang you can just tell;  
 their faces give them away. The faces, they're  
 not very good, children, at hiding.  
 Yeah they have a face like fat and you think, 'I'll  
 just keep an eye, watch them'.  
 I think this comes with parenting and you get to  
 know the children, which ones are likely to create  
 so they're the ones you know to keep an eye on.  
 It's tell tale signs isn't it? You just know there's  
 something.  
**What do you do if you sense there may be an  
 incident?**  
 Hang around. Make your presence felt, saunter  
 around towards them. You pretend you're  
 watching something else but edging up towards  
 them. Sometimes that's enough. Sometimes that

Visual - another  
set of eyes

Practical help

Need to involve  
children Listen  
to them.

We

Status

Children esteem

Conflict  
Seeing 1st

Conflict  
Teach

Visual

Intuition

Knowing children -  
unique context/  
relationship

Visual

Parenting

Expectations of  
individuals

Have a presence  
Children understand  
this.



Can assess and adjust	1377	doesn't work and you have to get in, especially if	Reflective - learn from experience
	1378	there is a fight.	
	1379	The thing I find frustrating is that sometimes you	Frustration
Frustration	1380	can get in there before something develops,	
	1381	before a fight starts and you can separate them	Specific skills - low of confidence
Swiftness needed	1382	but they won't be separated. You say, 'You go to	
	1383	that side and you go there'.	
Persistence of child	1384	They're like little Rottweilers. They go and they	Children's self-est and image
Estimate	1385	come back. They just can't be told. Once they get	
	1386	it into their head that their self-esteem is, or	
	1387	whatever, just means they just have to see these	
	1388	things through.	
Have to have their say	1389	It is important to kids to have their say, to say	Children having a voice
	1390	what they want to say.	
	1391	Oh it isn't saying it; it's getting a punch in.	
Fighting' used to represent range of behaviour	1392	Aye, but we don't really get lots of fighting, like real	
	1393	fights, do we? It's maybes arguments and bickering, and	Minor behavior not the type of consequences
Argue, bicker	1394	such. I can't think of when the last fight, proper fight like,	
Minor	1395	was. No, it's mainly minor things that we have to sort out.	
Need reminding	1396	Just remind them like.	
Throw	1397	We get them throwing stones, or waving sticks about, that	
	1398	sort of thing. They just don't think that it might hurt.	
Don't think of consequences	1399	The play fighting's the worst though. They don't	Children's self control
	1400	know when to stop and some of them don't	
Lack of self- control / self- awareness	1401	know their own strength.	
	1402	Some of the teachers don't even mind it; they	Teachers inconsistent
Play fighting - different views	1403	never stop it at playtime.	
	1404	Then again I think they're not bothered cos	Teachers lack pow
Lack of power of teachers	1405	there's no punishment at the end of it. No real	
	1406	punishment. They'll maybe stay in for lunchtime	
No punishment	1407	but well they don't want to be outside anyway.	
Lack of parental support	1408	The ones that are going on the Levels, that are	Lack of parent support
	1409	being sent home, well I've seen them out playing.	
Parentless	1410	That's not a punishment.	
Different parenting styles critical	1411	Well the mams don't want to. If mine were out,	
	1412	you'd get them in and tell them, but it's not a	
Generalization	1413	punishment. They shouldn't be watching tele or	
	1414	on the play stations or playing golf in the field	
No impact on children.	1415	like I see them. Y'know you think well that's not	
	1416	a punishment, so that's why they keep doing it.	

1417 **What do you think that parents think of you**  
1418 **and your role?**

Lack of respect  
- compared to  
teachers.

Stressful  
All these people

Not realised  
(appreciated)  
Difficult job

Hardest job in  
school.

Get some store  
in bus.

Could use to be  
appreciated.

1419 Not a lot at times. I don't think they respect us  
1420 like they would with a teacher.  
1421 It's funny cos when you do this job it is a  
1422 stressful job at times because you are all these  
1423 people and a couple of mums that have been in  
1424 relieving and they said 'Oh yeah' and they didn't  
1425 realise what a difficult job it is. I wish we could  
1426 have a mother in every week to just see.  
1427 Sometimes we've had comments, 'Oh they just  
1428 stand in the yard'. The Head of Governors once  
1429 had a meeting and he said we had the hardest job  
1430 in the school, he said because they let all their  
1431 steam off on a lunchtime and he said, 'You have,  
1432 you've got the hardest job'.

1433 **Is it hard, with you living in the area, if you**  
1434 **deal with a child? Does it cause any sort of**  
1435 **conflict?**

1436 Never happened to me.

No problems  
in community.

Understand  
confidentiality.

1437 It has once to me, on the school premises not  
1438 outside, never outside.  
1439 It could be a difficulty but it isn't.  
1440 But we do have instructions not to talk to parents  
1441 about children anyway.  
1442 Well I never do.

Have systems

1443 If they are. If they did ever come and try to talk  
1444 about them we'd just say, we're supposed to say,  
1445 refer them to the office.  
1446 Confidentially really.

Professional

Agree, each one

1447 After school we should really not say anything.  
1448 Yeah it's about being professional.  
1449 Yeah it's a level of professional.

Realise possible  
consequences

Don't get involved -  
impartial

Children can  
get over it.

1450 We could start World War 3. It's not his fault, it's  
1451 your child, oh it's better left.  
1452 It comes down to they are children. The adults  
1453 fall out and the children are friends in 5 minutes.  
1454 That's it.

Lack of respect

Stress

Challenge of role -  
multi-faceted,  
unpredictable

Confidentiality

Professional

Children's culture

	1455	<b>Do you know things about children's families?</b>	
We know	1456	You know background, sometimes, but you	
	1457	wouldn't talk to others about it. You wouldn't	Insider - we know children
Confidentiality	1458	say like, 'Well you know why he's messing about	
Influence of family	1459	don't you? You should see what the behaviour is	
	1460	at home. The dad's always swearing'. We don't	
	1461	talk about it. We might between us but we have	Influence of family assumptions
	1462	been warned about situations in the past. Don't	
	1463	let such and suches father come into the school	
	1464	because there's some danger of them being taken	
	1465	by the father in opposition to the mother. We	
	1466	were told about another that had died and things	
Leave in school	1467	like that so we have really serious cases but	
	1468	that's kept in school. It's left here.	
	1469	You've got to.	
	1470	It can make a difference though to how you are	Whole child perspective
If they know - can watch out for child.	1471	with the child. If like you know things aren't	
	1472	good between the mam and dad you'll maybe	Visual language
Whole child perspective	1473	watch out for them.	
	1474	<b>Think about yourself. Think about when you</b>	
	1475	<b>first started this job. How do you think you</b>	
	1476	<b>are different now? Can you remember that</b>	
	1477	<b>first week? How are you different now?</b>	
	1478	Well me personally I was the new girl with a	
Scary	1479	team so it wasn't just the children, it was going to	
	1480	a new job and I think the children were a bit	Scary, excitement
	1481	scary at first because there was a lot of them	
Excitement and scary	1482	together.	
	1483	It was very scary actually.	
	1484	It was excitement and scary at the same time.	
'I started - status again?	1485	When I started the rest of the team, the	Status of senior
	1486	supervisors, had all been here for a 100 years and	
Didn't tell you much	1487	they didn't actually tell you very much at all.	
	1488	Very minimal information.	
Lost - need to be part of team	1489	Yeah I found feeling lost.	Team
Old school - they're better now?	1490	They were the old school.	
	1491	They didn't tell you the routines in the dining	Communication
Old team	1492	room. They were the old team. We'd just get, 'We	
Poor communication	1493	know'. We've got a routine. That rota's good and	
Improved now	1494	we're not on the same job each week. We change	
Like rota, variety			

Fairness	1495	the infant end, junior end, dining room, so we all	Team-fairness
Preslatable	1496	get a turn, which is good like you say.	
	1497	We could look at the clock and we know what	
	1498	we should be doing and where we should be.	Routines
	1499	<b>Do you do it differently now? Have you</b>	
	1500	<b>changed the way that you do the job?</b>	
Used to shout	1501	Well I used to shout but I don't now cos I've	Learn from experience
- experience	1502	learned that it doesn't work.	
Learn	1503	You learn.	
Beneficial not	1504	It's beneficial not to shout and try to keep calm.	Calm
to shout	1505	I think with time you get to know the kids and	Humour
Need to be	1506	you know the ones you can be silly with. And	Individual approach
calm	1507	which ones you have to be firm with and which	- know children
know children	1508	ones you can be daft with.	
Individual	1509	Like some of the Year 6 ones, if I can see they're	Shared understanding
differences	1510	in a good mood I'll say, 'Now is everybody	Age differences
Read older	1511	alright or would you like me to cut that up for	
children	1512	you?' and they know I'm just being daft but that	
Age differences	1513	only comes from knowing the kids.	
	1514	And there's certain ones you couldn't do that to	
Knowing children	1515	because they look at you. They wouldn't know	
Humour	1516	you were just having a joke.	
	1517	When I first started I think I thought I always	
Learn from	1518	had to look busy so I'd be rushing about doing	
experience	1519	this and that. But I've learned now. It's okay	Visual
Eye out	1520	sometimes to just stand and keep an eye out. I	Love - joy of children
Like to watch	1521	love standing and watching a group just having a	Children read adults
'Love'	1522	chat like.	Confidence develops
calm	1523	I'm more confident with the children now and	
Confident	1524	they can sense that so I don't get any nonsense.	
Children can			
read adults			
	1525	<b>Would a training course have been of benefit?</b>	
Learn from	1526	You learn on the job yourself.	Learn from experience
experience	1527	Yes, it's got to be a hands on job. It's all right	
Relationships	1528	reading about it. It's about personal	Individual differences
Children	1529	relationships. And children. They're all different,	Relationships team
Individual	1530	very individual.	child
differences	1531	Talking can be good, to each other.	Team - communication
Talk to each	1532	You get different ideas and you get to know that	support
other	1533	what drives you up the wall drives her up the	
know each			
other.			

There for	1534	wall too.	
each other	1535	We need to be there for each other.	Lonely
(because	1536	We do talk to each other, but while I'm talking	
its lonely and	1537	I'm watching over a shoulder to see what's going	Visual language
no teacher	1538	on over there.	
support?)			
Always watching	1539	<b>If you could get some training, what do you</b>	
	1540	<b>think might help?</b>	
First Aid	1541	Things like First Aid.	
Drugs - specific	1542	Drugs. We've found needles in the bushes.	Specific training re
training	1543	Sometimes I think I'd like to do something about	
Hard to reach	1544	sorting out the ones that really mess about. Y'know	
children.	1545	the ones that don't seem to respond to anything we do.	
	1546	There's always one or two in each group.	
Teachers with	1547	Even a whole year group sometimes.	Hard to or
control	1548	Some of them though the teachers can't even	Beyond reach - sort
	1549	control.	individuals
Fight - how to	1550	I'm never quite sure how to handle a fight. I	
handle?	1551	mean how do you wade in, without getting	Children's safety
Protect self	1552	yourself hurt and without hurting the child?	
and child	1553	I wouldn't say training as such but maybe	
Meet with	1554	something with the teachers so we can kind of	Uncertainty of teachers
teachers - spell	1555	spell out what we do and just sort out what they	expectations
it out tell	1556	expect of us.	
them; what do	1557	And what we expect of them as well.	
they expect	1558	You're right. I think time to talk like that would	Lack of voice
And vice versa	1559	be good.	Need to communicate
Dialogue	1560	But then the meetings with the Head haven't	be assertive
Disappointment	1561	even gone on have they?	Disappointment in
	1562	Maybe we should take the stand on that, get	
Be more	1563	something going again.	
assertive	1564	Yeah but I sometimes wonder what's the point.	
Point?	1565	I worry sometimes what I'd do if a child came	Worry
Worry	1566	and told me something really personal, sensitive	
	1567	like.	
Responding to	1568	What like?	Communication
disclosure	1569	Abuse or something. What should I do?	
Able to say if	1570	Well yeah because they do talk to us.	Whole child perspective
untrue	1571	I know one little lad told me about his mum and	
Realise some children	1572	I think she was maybe drinking, so I just went	
may experience this	1573	and told the Head so I don't know what	Emotion - children, for
Not informed.	1574	happened then.	teachers, less so
Passed it on.			

	1575	<b>On balance, don't think about a particular</b>
	1576	<b>day, but generally how would you describe</b>
	1577	<b>your feelings about your job as a supervisor?</b>
Enjoy	1578	Enjoy it, frustrated.
Frustrated	1579	That's different. It comes when you walk in on a
Each day a	1580	morning and you don't know what's ahead of
New day	1581	you. I think, you don't walk in and think, 'Oh
Mixed feelings	1582	it's not going to be a good day. Can't be
	1583	bothered going in to work today', more than you
Wet play	1584	would normally, because we all feel that a bit.
Need to be out	1585	Wet playtimes are the worst when you know
	1586	they've never been over the doorstep from when
Dread	1587	they've come into school. Some days there are
	1588	feelings of dread, when it's a wet day and you're
Don't mind	1589	on juniors.
Like	1590	I don't mind wet playtimes.
	1591	No he likes them.
Odd wet play	1592	I must admit I don't mind a wet play. I hate it if
okay	1593	it's going to be the full week but the odd wet
	1594	play isn't bad.
Age differences	1595	No the odd one isn't.
	1596	The junior end is a different story.
Head teacher	1597	Don't like wet juniors. But the Head said she
(did it happen)	1598	was going to try to get them in the hall, all the
	1599	juniors, and I think that would be easiest because
	1600	there would be two supervisors in there to watch
	1601	them.
Risk of all	1602	I think there would be a riot.
together (crowd)	1603	But there is a riot in the class.
Put up with	1604	I think sometimes you put up with a little bit of
Flexible	1605	that because that helps them. If they throw things
Have boundaries	1606	it's mostly just paper aeroplanes but you have to
'You draw line'	1607	draw the line. If part of the idea is to let off
- not children	1608	steam then you have to allow this. It's when
(self control)	1609	they're running over the tables.
Expectations of	1610	That's right, you have to draw the line but a little
children's behaviour	1611	bit of boisterous behaviour, even in the
	1612	classroom, is acceptable for a Year 6 or Year 5
Limits to this	1613	class. It's when they go up and down the
Control?	1614	corridors trying to find somebody in another
	1615	class.

Enjoy  
Frustration  
Dread  
Like

Ends

Children need space

Wet play, different  
views, systems, conflict  
with need for space

Age differences

Involvement in decisions  
foot

Visual

Space

Children's needs

Children's self control

Expectations

Normality

Need to control/man  
see

1616 **Getting back, describe your feelings about**  
 1617 **your job as a supervisor.**

Challenge 1618 Well, it's like we said before, it's a challenge, I  
 Like 1619 like the challenge, every day is different, there's  
 Variety 1620 always something different isn't there?  
 Not for money 1621 Well if it was that bad I'd hang me pinny up. I'm  
 1622 not that desperate for a few quid.  
 Know each 1623 Last week J. came to me and said, 'I'm that far off  
 other 1624 hanging my pinny up', and I could see she was up  
 1625 to top doe.  
 Humour 1626 I'd really had a horrendous day.  
 Sort together 1627 So me being me I went and made her laugh and  
 1628 we went down together and sorted the problem  
 Language 1629 out but there is days when I must admit I think,  
 Arguments 1630 'What are you doing here?' Like when the  
 Control 1631 language is awful, there's arguments and I feel like  
 1632 I can't control.  
 On top of you 1633 Yeah if you feel that they've got on top of you  
 - they know 1634 it's catch 22 because if they think they've got on  
 Children read 1635 top they seem to keep going and they know  
 adults + situation 1636 they've got to you.  
 Openness 1637 But at least we can be open enough with each  
 Team 1638 other to say, 'I've had enough of this'. But we  
 Appreciate 1639 don't get many days like that. It's good though  
 Mutual support 1640 that we can say that to one another.  
 Confidence? 1641 I'm sure there are some teachers who wouldn't  
 Teachers couldn't 1642 want to say, 'I find my class difficult to manage,  
 say this - why? 1643 I can't cope'. It would be like saying they  
 But they say it 1644 couldn't do their job.  
 and can do their 1645 Obviously it's confidence that we've got.  
 job. 1646 And it depends on how you feel, if you're not  
 1647 feeling good, it depends on the day. Like last  
 Personal circumstances 1648 week I was starting with a cold, my head was  
 Can make it 1649 thumping and the last thing I really wanted was  
 Harder 1650 to be here but obviously I was and I could hear  
 1651 the noise in the dining room. Any other day  
 1652 it wouldn't bother us at all but my head was  
 1653 pounding. If you're feeling a bit off, problems  
 1654 and things, it makes it harder.  
 Poor pay but 1655 The pay isn't brilliant but you know what you're  
 you know this 1656 getting when you take it. So there must be

Challenge

Variety

Motivation - not  
financial

Emotion - top doe

Know each other, support  
each other

Need to be in  
control

Children read adults  
and situation

Reflective, openness, trust  
humour

Personal factors

Motivation - not pay

Not pay - intrinsic  
satisfaction?

Humour 1657

Cart 1659

Believe 1660

Like children 1661

Important job 1662

Support for 1663

Teachers 1664

Parenting 1665

Nurturing 1666

There for children 1667

Pride in job 1668

1657 something about the job that we like, cos it isn't  
1658 the money. I think we must be drugged. Think  
1659 we've been hypnotised and keep coming back.

1660 No, it goes back to liking the children and  
1661 wanting to do a good job. It's an important job  
1662 that we do.

1663 Definitely, because we're letting the  
1664 teachers have their time and the teachers do need  
1665 and get back to it on the afternoon. I think as

1666 well there is some mothering and fathering that  
1667 we do. It's like when that mother died a while  
1668 back, the younger of the two boys used to come  
1669 to me for a little hug, quite often he would come  
1670 he wanted his mummy. I told him I couldn't get  
1671 him his mummy and couldn't get him a new one.

1672 I said that if Morrison's sold new mummies I  
1673 would get him one but they don't. I said I know  
1674 it's terrible but we can't do anything about it but  
1675 come for a hug anytime you want, and he did.

1676 For a while. It was nice to know that you were  
1677 there. And if the other kids said anything I would  
1678 say he was just having a dose of the miseries, he  
1679 was feeling miserable and that was as far as I  
1680 would explain. He was only little.

1681 Yeah they come to you if their dog's died or the  
1682 Grandmother isn't very well. Or even the fish.

1683 That can be quite dramatic.

1684 Yeah but it's important to that child isn't it? It  
1685 was a really horrible day for her. Her little face,  
1686 she loved her fish. Bless her.

1687 **If a miracle happened overnight, you went to**  
1688 **bed and woke up and realised that through**  
1689 **the night a miracle had happened.**

1690 What, I'd won the lottery?

1691 No, much better than that. You came into  
1692 school and this miracle had happened where  
1693 your job was just wonderful. Everything  
1694 about your job was just perfect. What would  
1695 that look like? What would be different to how  
1696 it would be today?

Humour

Motivation - like child  
recognise importance.

Support for teachers

Parenting  
Nurturing

There for child - been  
needed

Individual child,  
whole child



Human	1697	The children wouldn't be in school. They'd all be
Bless	1698	off. Bless them. No, the children would just be
Expectations	1699	what you would expect and want children to be.
Want	1700	Yes. You might section me after this but I
	1701	wouldn't want anything to change.
Nothing to	1702	Oh I think I would.
change	1703	No I wouldn't actually.
Like them to	1704	No, I'd like children to listen to you. Some won't
bite (control?)	1705	listen and they won't be told.
	1706	Oh yes, but you're never going to get them,
Some don't -	1707	because you're always going to have some that
most do?	1708	don't.
	1709	Yes, but remember we've had a miracle so that's
	1710	what would be different.
More normal	1711	I think about 60 or 70% of the kids are perfectly
as you'd expect	1712	normal human beings and they do things you
	1713	would expect them to do. Sometimes they just
Some not nice	1714	push things but that's okay. It would nice if the
don't conform	1715	other 30% were in the same kind of frame of
- amenable,	1716	mind so you would think of them as nice
think for selves	1717	human beings and they could behave in society
Frustrated on?	1718	like everybody else does. It doesn't mean that
Control?	1719	they have to be identical and perfect and clones.
Want conformity?	1720	No, just amenable to a bit of suggestion and to
	1721	think for themselves.
Children's self	1722	Yeah some of them get so fired up you've hardly
control - fired	1723	got time to say, 'Now hang on'. No they're off on
up.	1724	one. A lot of that comes, when you listen to
Influence of	1725	them, it comes from the parents. They
Parents	1726	might say like, 'My dada says do this if
assumptions/	1727	somebody does that to you, you hit back'. You
home	1728	challenge this but it's hard going against
They have limited	1729	the dad.
influence	1730	It's not sorting it out by non-violent
Make job	1731	means and go to the dinner lady or whatever. It's
harder.	1732	reactive. They hit you so you hit them. And
Reactive - not	1733	we've got to deal with that as well. We're up
seeking help or	1734	against the parents sometimes as well.
advice		
Up against it		
Influencer on		
children.		

'Bless' - endearing  
children, petronising?

Expectations of children  
normality.

Be in control, be  
listened to, want  
conformity

Children's self-control

Assumptions about  
parents and support  
blame

Limits to their  
influence

	1735	<b>If the miracle happened, how would that be different?</b>	
	1736		
Just you -	1737	If the miracle happened there would just be	Want autonomy
no interference,	1738	you out there doing the job. As it stands I	
influences	1739	think we're all right staff wise, aren't we?	
Number of	1740	For the number of children.	
staff	1741	<b>If the miracle happened, how would things</b>	
	1742	<b>with parents be different?</b>	
Leave us to	1743	They'd leave us to get on with our jobs.	
it - we know	1744	Sometimes they tell their kids not to listen to us.	Assumptions about
what we're	1745	I'd like them to tell the kids off if we have, just	parents
doing.	1746	like we used to get from our Dads.	Interference from other
Support us	1747	<b>How would you feel about the teachers being</b>	
back as well	1748	<b>out on duty with you?</b>	
Assuming they			
done			
Very firm	1749	No, no, no. I don't like it. There's one teacher	
Confuses	1750	who does come out sometimes and he gets in the	Space
Terrify / scare -	1751	way I think. It confuses things him being out	own stuff
ownership of it	1752	there.	
Who's in	1753	He plays football.	Being clear who is in
charge.	1754	But it's hard to know who's in charge when he's	charge
Like clear	1755	there. Is it him, as a teacher, or us?	Role clarity
delination	1756	I disagree. When he comes out he's not standing	
Be clear about	1757	like. I like it when he's playing. What I don't	
roles. Confusion	1758	like is that he doesn't recognise his role when	
children?	1759	he's playing. He's behaving like a teacher and	
	1760	getting involved in issues that he shouldn't get	
	1761	involved in.	
But, lack of	1762	Yes that's fair enough. Some others, some	
support,	1763	teachers come out but they sort of brush	
consistency	1764	everything off. They leave it to us and say, 'It's	
	1765	not my concern at this time. Go and see a dinner	
	1766	lady'. Sometimes I feel like, there is one person	
	1767	who comes out, and I feel like she's watching us.	
Gone higher-	1768	Yes, I've had a word about that and it's gone	Hierarchy, status
status	1769	higher.	
	1770	I know she's got her own daughter out there but	
Keep personal	1771	we've all had our own out there and you've just	Professional stance
professional	1772	to separate out because we've always like, if	- boundaries
separate.			

	1773	there was trouble going on and it was J.'s son, she	
	1774	doesn't deal with it.	
	1775	I've always maintained that and now my	
	1776	grandson's here and if there's incidents I just	
Can't be impartial	1777	pass it on cos at the end of the day they are yours	Impartially
	1778	so you've got to pass it on. Keep your personal	
	1779	life separate.	
	1780	<b>What else might be different if the miracle</b>	
	1781	<b>happened?</b>	
Toys - not lost or broken	1782	I'd like more toys, but the miracle would be that	Children - toys, games
	1783	they didn't get broken or lost. They would stay	
	1784	here after play. They wouldn't disappear.	
Quiet area	1785	I'd be interested in the quiet area. We've got this	Facilities - seating, quiet, so things children want
	1786	quiet area at the moment that doesn't work as	
	1787	one because it's quite a good play area. They	
Unclear about function.	1788	climb on the benches and play there and it's too	
	1789	noisy and they're not supposed to. At another	Organisation needs to be properly set up
Not set up properly	1790	school the quiet area is differently structured. It's	
	1791	separate and it has a sort of gazebo.	
	1792	I have asked for a roof for ours where they could	
Recognising what children want and why, and how it might work.	1793	sit but there is laws. Like if anybody had to go on	
	1794	the roof, or like a burglar, and they stood on that	
	1795	and fell through it they could sue the school,	
	1796	which is ridiculous because they shouldn't have	
	1797	been there in the first place. So, it all boils down	
	1798	to rules and regulations. But I did ask for the	
Not optimistic	1799	summer time for a canopy that can go in and out.	Lack of influence
	1800	If that comes off well I don't know. In this	
Asked for - but don't know	1801	school there isn't any shade if they need it.	
Shade	1802	Yeah we'd like toys, a quiet area and some	
	1803	shade.	
Have ideas for improvements	1804	The quiet area should be better enclosed. Ours is	
	1805	a bit stark. It could be a nice area. You could see	
	1806	them from the windows in the school. But a	
Set it up right	1807	quiet area could even be plop in the middle of	
	1808	the playground if we set it up right.	
Seating	1809	There's not a lot of seating. We've got those	
Gender	1810	railway beams and they sit on there. The bigger	Gender and age
	1811	girls like to sit and have a natter because	
Recognising poor opportunities but realise has to be set up properly	1812	otherwise there isn't anywhere for them to do	
	1813	this. It is good but it's not the best place because	

Children	1814	it's a bit muddy there. We could do with more
don't use	1815	seating really.
all	1816	I think even the markings, like hopscotch and
facilities	1817	that, real games are little used here. We showed
Have to show	1818	them how to play two balls, me and J. with the
Don't know	1819	girls, and they had no idea how to.
how to play	1820	Personally they don't know how to play is what I
Gender	1821	think. They do skipping. It's seasonal. They'll go,
Football	1822	'Oh great the skipping is out'. But the boys, it's
Seasons / fads	1823	football, football, football. They don't change.
	1824	But we have had a bit of change to rugby. That's
	1825	our new one.
No time - too	1826	There isn't a lot of time to teach them games
busy	1827	though.
Teaching part	1828	If the miracle happened it would be nice to have
of role.	1829	time to teach them some games and things.
Boredom	1830	They do it for so long and then get bored.
Fads	1831	It's a fad. And then the tennis starts and they
Space - lucky	1832	have a go at that. We are lucky we have got a lot
Porn name of	1833	of space. But there's only one stretch of wall they
football	1834	can use because there's a lot of windows. They're
	1835	competing against the footballers with that,
	1836	who volley the ball against the wall.
Safety	1837	We've got boys in the netball team but our posts
Ast for - not	1838	aren't fixed in the ground and the little ones
happened	1839	could be hurt if they fall. We've asked for them
Disappointed	1840	to be fixed but it hasn't happened yet.
Don't see why	1841	One of the teachers can be a bit protective over
can't have	1842	the equipment, 'Oh you can't have the netballs'.
Can't rely on	1843	She didn't want them to unless she was
teacher	1844	supervising, but she never does. They were
Children are	1845	perfectly responsible though.
responsible.	1846	They do need a net to throw a ball at. They've
Choices	1847	got a choice then, whether they want to play or
	1848	not.
Help to play	1849	We do need to help the children to play. I think
Social skills	1850	that's part of our job, about showing them things
Part of job	1851	like sharing and taking turns. It goes deeper than
They trust children	1852	that cos the ones who don't know how to play
teachers don't?	1853	are the ones that don't know how to socialise
	1854	either.
	1855	Some want to sit inside as well.
Role model	1856	They can't play in threes cos then it's like, 'She's

Not knowing how to  
play / use facilities  
Choices

Seasons / fads

Gender

Domination of football

Too busy

Part of role - to teach  
games

Children's limited  
interest / can't sustain

Space - lucky

Teachers conflict, can  
rely on

Safety - over protects

Children are responsible  
trust them

Facilitate play, social  
skills

Social disputes			
	1857	my friend and why's she playing with her?'. And	Problem solve
	1858	I say, 'Well Mrs F's my friend and Mrs C. is my	
I Need	1859	friend. We've all got more than one friend'. It	
help to resolve	1860	seems like you have to sort problems like that	
	1861	out. They usually come round. Social skills are	
Social problems	1862	important but for some being inside is like a	Inside refuge for some
Inside is a	1863	refuge for them, they worry that if they go out	
refuge	1864	they won't have anybody to talk. By being in	
	1865	the cloakroom they kind of, they know that they're	
Attention from	1866	going to be thrown out by one us but they get	Attention
adult.	1867	an interaction. You find that more with the girls	
They know	1868	though. The girls are more, the boys don't seem to	Gender and expectations
Gender	1869	bother about playing in 2,3,and 4's. 'She's not my	know children
can admit to feelings	1870	friend, she's gone off with her, she was playing	
Can cope with	1871	with me this morning'.	
- can admit	1872	I can't cope with kids who tell tales and ones that	
	1873	go on like that, about friends. It's the same ones	Team - trust
Gender	1874	as well. You get the boys who have a little fight	
Expectation	1875	and blah blah and then they get into a certain	
	1876	year and you never see the fighting again, cos its	
Football is a diversion.	1877	football. The football kicks in and that's them.	
	1878	<b>So, if the miracle happened?</b>	
	1879	Well they'd all get on. They'd share everything.	
Variety	1880	They'd try different things, not just stick to the	Children stuck in routines of play and socialisation
More mixing	1881	same things every day.	(confidence / familiarity)
Need to have arguments	1882	I'd like to see more of them mixing.	
Learn from this	1883	I think they need to have their little arguments	Normality of arguments - learn from them.
	1884	though don't they? They need to learn how to sort	
	1885	things out amongst their selves.	
	1886	Aye, but they need to do that without it getting out	
	1887	of hand.	
Not too bad.	1888	I go back to what I said though, I don't think too	Balanced view of lunchtimes
	1889	much would have to change for the miracle. It's	
	1890	not too bad.	
	1891	<b>Is there anything else you'd like to talk about</b>	
	1892	<b>in terms of the purpose of the lunch period</b>	
	1893	<b>and your role?</b>	
	1894	No I can't think of anything, I'm all talked out.	Not having time for talk, reflection
Surprised - as time/opportunity to talk like this	1895	It's surprising isn't it, when you get started	

1896 there's so much to say. I didn't realise just how  
1897 much we did.  
1898 We should maybe ask for a pay rise.

*unappreciated*

*Portraits  
how much  
they do.  
Take for granted?*

## **Appendix 9**

### **Annotated Version of Interview 2**

## Appendix 9

### Annotated Version of Interview 2

#### Lunchtime Supervisors Focus Group Interview 2

##### *Transcription conventions:*

- Researcher questions/comments are in bold font.
- Noises of assent (e.g. *hmm*) have been removed.
- Names have been altered to anonymous initials.

- 1 **When I arrived I noticed that you were**  
2 **meeting in the little foyer before you**  
3 **start. Why do you do that?**
- 4 Just if there is anything that we need to tell  
5 one another. If we've got a problem or a  
6 query or such like we can have a bit chat  
7 about it.
- 8 Yeah, it's normally about ten minutes  
9 before.
- 10 We have a chat about what we've been up  
11 to as well. Cos you need that really. Well  
12 we've become like friends haven't we? We  
13 kinda look out for each other. It helps like, cos if  
14 I know something's gone on at her house last  
15 night. I'll know that she mightn't want to be  
16 bothered with things, so I'll step in if there's a  
17 problem.
- 18 Yeah we do, sometimes like you barely  
19 know one another's in cos you're so busy  
20 seeing to the kids.
- 21 It may not even be more than, 'You alright today?'  
22 I was thinking it's not right really is it? I mean anybody  
23 could walk by and hear what we were saying.  
24 Aye but we don't talk loud like.
- 25 No, but if it's something confidential we should think  
26 about that shouldn't we?
- 27 We should go somewhere else.  
28 What, like the staffroom?  
29 And make us a cuppa.
- Support each other. Need to tell.*  
*Arrive early to foster this value*  
*Social chat - need friends, support each other*  
*Personal issues*  
*So busy sometimes but still check on each other. Caring*  
*Confidential*  
*Nowhere to meet.*  
*Seem surprised that in the staffroom -*
- Team support*  
*Commitment and value support of it*  
*Friendships between supervisors*  
*Emotional support*  
*Know each other and their workload*  
*Busy seeing to kids*  
*Care for each other*  
*Need for confidence*  
*Look up space to talk*  
*Need time to think (reflect)*



	30	Well the Head has said we can go and get a drink.	Feeling not part of staff.
Don't feel comfortable w/ staff	31	I know but you don't like to do you?	Status issue
	32	Last time we met, you sometimes referred to the job as 'dinner ladies'. Would this be your preferred title, instead of lunchtime supervisor?	Demarcation of space for teacher supervisors
Title is important	33		
- status	34		
- value of job	35	Well straight off I'd have to say being called a dinner lady wouldn't be good for me, being a man. But joking aside, it sounds a bit, I don't know, like not much of a job. I think lunchtime supervisor sounds better.	Status and title - image
- sound of it	36	I'd agree with that. We don't just look after the dinners do we? We're there all through the lunch.	Play with children
More than supervise	37	We are, but we do more than just supervise don't we?	Broader role, not just supervise
	38	Like for example when we play with children, that's not supervising is it, really?	Facilitate Nurture
Wind beneath wings	39	You're right there. It's like what we said last time. It's about being the wind beneath their wings, in that song.	Promote social skills - now - future
Setup - stand back	40	We set things up, we encourage and we praise, and we try to make sure that the children are playing and getting on with each other.	Make sure -
Encourage, praise	41	Well it's what they need when they're up, adults like.	
Social - now and future	42	They can't go on bashing somebody who has taken their pencil in the office now can they?	
	43	It's hard to know what to call us, well what would be polite that is.	
Clarity over role through job title	44	I don't mind being a lunchtime supervisor, it's better than dinner lady. Some are called mid-day supervisors but we're not there through the afternoon so to speak so that's a bit confusing.	Want meaningful job title.
Humour	45	We could get ourselves a fancy title that means nothing, like facilitator or something.	Best of choice - lunchtime super (but limited)
Title that means something	46	What about Lunchtime Dining and Playing Consultant Specialist?	
	47	That'd be right. It's a right mouthful anyway.	
	48		
	49	Is there a title for your role in the job description?	
No job description	50	What job description? I've never seen one.	Look of job description
	51	Neither have I.	

Didn't ask - got on.	66	I haven't but then I didn't ask for one either. I just got on	Get on with job.
	67	with it.	Lack of confidence to ask
	68	<b>When you took the job did you talk with the Head</b>	
	69	<b>about what she expected?</b>	
General chat about role - organisation - behaviour	70	Now, that'll make me put my thinking hat on cos it was	Expectations of superiors - organis. behaviour
	71	years ago. I think we did to some extent. But I think it	Assumption - com- mence. (Head)
	72	was just about making sure the dinners go through	
No significant recall of what expected.	73	quickly and making sure there were no fights. Use your	
	74	common sense really.	
	75	I can't really remember much either, it was probably the	
Employ who is available	76	same.	Convenient appointment
	77	I didn't even get an interview like. I think they were just	Selection process flawed
	78	so pleased to get somebody to do the job. I don't think	
Supervision / appraisal / feedback	79	I've turned out too bad though. Well nobody has said	Lack of feedback superiors of appo
	80	anything to the contrary.	No positive feed
	81	No, but we don't get told we've done a good job either do	
Not appraised. Views others have of their role	82	we?	Can disagree in it
	83	To be frank I think there's people in the school who are	Not appraised
	84	just happy that we turn up each day and babysit the	Viewed as babysit
Able to disagree if ask - are appreciated. Own confidence	85	children.	Lack of self-worth
	86	Oh I wouldn't agree with that. I bet if you ask them they	
	87	would say we do a lot more. We should be more careful	
Need to be near Nicer. On same level	88	not to put ourselves down. If we do it, others will surely	
	89	follow suit.	
	90	<b>Let's think back to the lunchtime when I was</b>	
Physical demands	91	<b>observing. I noticed that you would bend down and</b>	
	92	<b>talk to the children. Can you tell me about that?</b>	
	93	You need to get near to the children.	Equality - same level as children. Joining them
Eye contact Considerate	94	I always think it's nicer than looking down.	Relationship with child
	95	That's it. You're on their level then.	Physical demands of role
	96	It does hurt my knees though.	
	97	I sometimes get down onto my knees.	
	98	Oh I couldn't do that.	
	99	I like to look them in the eye. When I'm telling them off	
	100	it sounds more like I mean it and it's the same if I'm	Eye contact - assertiveness
	101	saying something nice to them.	3 relationship

Resilive eye			
contact can	102	Some of them don't like eye contact though do they?	Assumptions about
make some	103	Well no, they're maybe not used to having nice things	children, experience
uncomfortable.	104	said to them.	
Assumptions about			
children's experience	105	Some of them can't cope with it, even when you tell them	Understanding children
Understanding children	106	off they might smirk, cos they're embarrassed.	resilience.
reactions and	107	That's right and you've got to learn not to get annoyed by	Moderate own
moderating own	108	that.	response.
response			
	109	<b>One or two of you put your arm on their shoulders.</b>	
Comfort	110	It's more for like comfort.	Nurture and
children.	111	If one of them was maybe hurt at football, you reach out	comfort
	112	and touch them, for comfort like.	
Nurture,	113	And you give them a clean tissue and you might say,	
distract	114	'Look there no bleeding, everything's okay. Breathe in	Distracton and
	115	your nose not your mouth'.	attention
	116	I often say something, like, 'Is it your ball you're all	
	117	playing with today? Oh whose is it then?' While they're	
	118	thinking about what you've asked them they forget	
	119	they've hurt themselves.	
	120	It's a mixture of codology and mothering.	Codology
Codology	121	Yeah you have to calm them down. It's often more of a	Mothering
Mothering	122	fright than anything.	
Understanding	123	It's often not the actual injury that makes them cry and	Know and
children's feelings	124	they just want that bit of attention, just for a minute or	understand
	125	two.	individual
	126	I was thinking, when it does happen, I always let the child	children
Let child be the	127	initiate it. If they want comfort, they'll come and they'll	
guide	128	maybe lean against you.	Let child be the
	129	You're right, and I think it depends on who the child is.	guide
Know children,	130	You have to know them to know whether they want	
understand	131	comfort, and how they like it.	
individual needs	132	Sometimes I might just touch their forearm, and that's	
	133	enough.	Physical contact
Light, brief	134	I often tap the shoulder.	is important
Physical	135	It's often the little ones that like a bit cuddle.	(light, brief)
contact	136	I might sometimes say to the bigger ones, if they're being	Age difference
Age difference	137	silly like, 'Do you want a cuddle?' It soon stops them.	comforting re
Humour	138	As I say I'd always wait until they initiate it. I think we	Humour
Must wait for	139	need to be careful but it's not something I worry about. As	
child to initiate			

Priority-children

to be 140  
happy- 141  
it's what they 142  
are there for 143  
Fair 144  
Be there for 145  
them 146  
Mother to all,  
mother to none 147

Teacher/parent 148  
role - confusion 149  
150

Reflect 151  
152  
153  
In-betweenies 154

155  
Be there for 156  
children 157

Age differences 158  
Reach out to 159  
them 160

Protect 161  
162  
Recognise 163  
boundaries 164

Common-sense 165  
166

Care - show it 167  
banter 168  
humour 169

Know children 170  
and be careful 171

Open-minded 172  
173

Share world 174  
of child 175  
176  
177

long as they're happy. That's what we're here for.  
We sometimes pull them along like when we're playing  
games. I know you've got to be careful over physical  
contact but it's not hitting them or anything.  
But it's like mother to all, mother to none. You've got to  
be fair. Be there for them like, but not like their real  
mums and dads.

**Do you think the physical contact is important?**

Well it's like we said before, we're not quite teachers and  
we're not quite parents but we're a bit of both so you  
have to ask yourself, 'If he's upset what would the parent  
do? 'Ah well she'd maybe give a bit cuddle and a chat',  
but then, 'What would the teacher do? 'Oh well they'd  
maybe distract them and get their minds off it'. So you do  
both really.

We're in-betweenies.  
You have to be there for them, especially the little ones.  
If they're heartbroken you have to reach out to them don't  
you?  
They just like to feel as if they're protected.  
I think sometimes others, teachers and that, get too  
worked up about the contact and worrying what it means.  
I think you should do it if it's needed but be sensible like,  
not in a room by yourself.

You've just got to use your common sense.  
It's not just about giving them a bit of a cuddle though.  
You've got to be there for them all of the time. You kinda  
show them that you care through little things. Like having  
a bit of banter with them. Showing them you've got a  
sense of humour.

You have to be careful with some, they take it too far.  
Aye they do that.  
You have to be open-minded in this job, some of the  
things that you hear.  
Yeah, it would be no good if you were easily offended.  
It's not just the things that you hear them say about their  
own lives but it's what they say to you as well.  
Aye sometimes they say they hate us.

Supervisors are  
there to ensure  
children are  
happy

Fairness - mother  
to all, mother to  
Nature - be there  
for them

Teacher/parent  
in-betweenies

Age differences  
effect  
Nurture - reach  
out to them

Protect children  
Be sensible

Recognise bounds

Common-sense

Be there for it  
all the time

Show you care -  
banter, humour

Open-minded

Share world of  
the child

Can't be easily  
5 offended.

	178	That's cos we've told them off or such like.	
Children	179	The teachers wouldn't put up with that though, but we	Status
ride to them	180	have to.	compared to
but not teachers	181	Mind, I think if you're polite and that to them they give it	teachers
Why 'have to'	182	back.	
put up with it	183	Some do.	
Show respect to	184	Oh I don't know I think there are a lot of them that do. It	Mutual
get respect	185	goes back to you have to show respect to get respect	Respect
	186	doesn't it?	
	187	<b>You mentioned before about being by yourself. I</b>	
	188	<b>noticed that for much of the time you were all stood</b>	
	189	<b>on your own and didn't really have children holding</b>	
	190	<b>onto your hands.</b>	
Game playing	191	No, some of them do. One who does was off today.	Play games
	192	It just depends, on a nice day you might have them	with children
	193	hanging onto your pinny tail.	
	194	She's playing a game with them y'see.	
	195	I say, 'Have you seen so and so?', pretending like, and	
	196	the kids shout out, 'He's behind you'.	
	197	<b>It's interesting that you mentioned playing. There was</b>	
	198	<b>some play with the children with footballs and ropes.</b>	
Watching	199	It can be difficult, you have to be watching all of the time	Challenge of
Challenge to	200	but they love it when you join in with them.	watch / play
do this and play	201	Even if you just get a game going and then kind of bow	Facilitate play
Children love	202	out gracefully so to speak.	and step back
supervisors joining	203	There are some who like you to maybe kick a ball or	
them.	204	throw a ball to you. Often there's ones who have	
'Bow out'	205	particular issues so you have to give them some time.	Individual need
Some need more	206	But you also have to try to engineer situations where	more time for so
time.	207	somebody else joins in and takes over for you so they've	Facilitate children
Set up play	208	got somebody else to play with.	playing with each
situations	209	They do think it's great when you play with them but it's	other
	210	not too good if my attention is directed somewhere else	
Eyes	211	and not at all of the others.	Eyes - watching
Let them know	212	I sometimes just sweep around with my eyes and shout	Presence
I'm still there	213	out, 'Everybody alright?' just to let them know I'm still	Children love
Presence.			adults joining
			them.

	214	there really.
Pretending	215	I'll maybe get the game going and then say, 'Oh this poor
Setting things up	216	old dear is tired can you keep it going for me?'
Socialisation	217	Socialisation and friend problems, you've got to watch
Friend problems	218	for that. Sometimes they may come and stand and watch
Watch.	219	and you know so you'll maybe invite them to join in and
Read children	220	sort of ease them in.
	221	Or you might try to get them involved with another game
	222	instead of standing with me.
Watch	223	You have to watch out for signs of bullying as well.
Bullying	224	There's a few quiet corners where they could easily get
	225	up to something so you watch for that.
Quiet corners	226	That's where being approachable helps doesn't it? I've
Approachable	227	had some come and tell me if somebody is getting at
	228	them.
	229	<b>There seemed to be a quiet area and some playground</b>
	230	<b>markings. I don't think I saw anybody using these?</b>
Not using	231	No they don't. None of it is set up right. I don't think
facilities	232	anybody has really talked to the children about what a
Set it up	233	quiet area is.
right	234	Well it doesn't even look very nice does it? It's just a
Talk to children	235	couple of benches in a corner.
Things should	236	And they like climbing on them.
look nice	237	It's a shame because some of them do like to chat but
	238	they can't really go there.
Climbing	239	I used to keep telling them to clear away but I got fed up
Chatting	240	of doing it. I was like a broken record.
	241	This is where we need to set things up with teachers.
Set it up	242	Aye have like a big thing made of it.
with teachers	243	The school should have tried to make it look nicer.
School responsibility	244	Well that comes down to money doesn't it?
Money	245	We've got a PTA, they could have been asked.
	246	But who would ask them?
	247	It's not down to us is it?
	248	The Head could.
	249	What about the School Council?

Persona  
 Facilitate  
 Watch  
 Read children  
 Know children  
 Social / friends  
 Hidden corner  
 Bullying  
 Approachable  
 Trust  
 Relationship  
 children

Organisation of  
 facilities - show  
 understanding  
 Attractive fault  
 Variety, range  
 of needs - then  
 chat

Communication w  
 teachers  
 School/Head  
 responsibility  
 Funding

	250	<b>You seem to have plenty of ideas about improving</b>	
	251	<b>things. Who do you talk with about these?</b>	
Not our place to speak	252	I don't know. I sometimes feel like it's not our place.	Not our place to speak
	253	I don't think there is a lot of interest if I'm honest. I think	Teachers -
	254	the teachers have got so much on that they just want to	Leave playground
	255	leave the playground to us.	to supervisors
We know how things could be better	256	It's a shame though isn't it? We can see how things	We know how to improve
	257	would be better.	Disheartened
Disheartened - not listened to.	258	But we've said things in the past and nothing happens so	
	259	you just get disheartened.	
	260	Perhaps we should just do some of the things that we	
	261	think would be better.	
	262	Aye and that'd be noticed and then there'd be hell to pay.	Ownership of not
Hell to pay	263	I don't know, we sorted out a rota between ourselves and	Head delegates responsibility for rota.
She'd leave it to us - rota.	264	the Head thought that was a good idea. She even said	
	265	she'd leave it to us.	
	266	<b>Some of you seemed to work in the Hall and some</b>	
	267	<b>were outside. Can you talk about how you organise</b>	
	268	<b>that?</b>	
Rota positive - variety of roles - get to know children	269	We have a sort of rota. We change it each week.	Shared responsib
	270	It gets you involved in different areas. You get to know	Team approach
	271	how things work everywhere and not just your bit.	
	272	When I first came here everybody had the same bits of	
	273	jobs they'd done for yonks and they were like so	
	274	protective of it and you couldn't change anything. They	Help each other
They wouldn't help but we will.	275	wouldn't help you if you were stuck or anything.	Work together
	276	I think this way's better because we work more together	
	277	and we all know what's going on.	
Some jobs don't like but move on	278	Don't get me wrong, there are some things I don't like	Movement - role variety
	279	doing but you know it's only for that time and you'll be	
	280	moved around soon.	
	281	You get to know more of the kids that way don't you?	
know children	282	Yeah or don't get bored.	
Don't get bored	283	Sometimes though if you're out first and it's not a nice	Some days seem long
	284	day and the kids are playing up it can seem like a long	
Some days are long.	285	day.	
	286	And if you're last out you might only get five or ten	

	287	minutes outside.	
	288	And if you've got a freezing winter you might get 40	Weather condition
	289	minutes outside.	(for supervisory)
Out in the cold.	290	I'll be wanting a change then.	
	291	<b>There seemed to be some areas where the children</b>	
	292	<b>could play and some that were restricted?</b>	
Headmaster decision	293	The Head decided on that really. I mean the field is	Head decides
	294	massive so there's plenty of space there for them, and	
Space	295	they've got the playground so they don't really need to go	Value of space
	296	anywhere else.	
See them - that's important	297	Most of the time we can see them and that's what's	
	298	important.	Need to see children
	299	Unless they're in the bushes.	
	300	Where they're not meant to be.	
Need to see - stops problems	301	We do need to see them though, it stops problems.	See children - stop problems
	302	<b>You said the Head decided on that. Would you have it</b>	
	303	<b>any different?</b>	
	304	No, I don't think I would.	
Agree with Head	305	But if we did find something hard, let's say she decided	Agree with Head
	306	they could go round the side well we'd have to say.	but could say if not.
Have to say if don't agree	307	They can go inside for the toilet and that's a problem, in	
	308	the junior end anyway.	Basic needs met
Basic needs	309	Yes but you can't stop them using the toilet can you?	
	310	Why can't they use the infant toilet? It's easier to get to	'Eye on'
	311	and we could keep an eye on things.	No time to reflect
'Eye on' Hadn't thought of it.	312	I hadn't thought of that.	
g-	313	<b>Talk about the areas that the children use to play in.</b>	
	314	Well there's the big playground like, and the fields.	Value of space
Lucky to have space	315	They're very lucky to have so much space.	
	316	Aye but it still causes bother because the bigger boys	Dominance of bigger boys / foot
Older / bigger boys dominate space with football	317	have the main football game but won't let the little ones	
	318	join them.	Ownership of space
Potential for little ones to get hurt	319	No well I can understand that, because the little ones	
	320	would get hurt and they can't play as skilfully as the older	Potential to be hurt
Skill of older.			Understand different views of children - balanced.



	321	ones.	
There is	322	Yes, and they've got the smaller yard or that bit of field if	
choice	323	they want so they've got choice.	Choice
Football and	324	I think they just like the status of being in the big boys'	Status of
status	325	football team, that's what it's about.	football game
Dominance of	326	I get fed up with football though because you only have	
space by few	327	about 20 or so lads and they have most of the playground	Restrictions to
boys. Unfair.	328	so it's not fair. The girls can't get a ball and throw that	girls play
Girls restricted	329	around for fear of getting a ball in the face off the boys.	
by football	330	You've got to watch when you walk up that area.	
Nice if they	331	At least it's up, away from the other bits of the	
changed.	332	playground though, not like some playgrounds.	
But they	333	But wouldn't it make a nice change if they played	
enjoy football	334	something else?	
	335	But why, if it's what they enjoy?	
	336	I suppose. I don't know, I just think they could do	
	337	something else that's all.	
	338	Like what?	
	339	Oh I don't know. Play Dr Who or something. Use their	
	340	brains a bit more. Mix more with the girls and the	
	341	younger ones. Have a bit of a chat. Bit of variety would	
	342	be good that's all.	
	343	What about those silly young boys though, all they do	
	344	every day is run around and chase each other and try to	
	345	wrestle to the ground. That's just the same a lot of the	
	346	time.	
	347	I know, I know. I guess what I mean is it would be nice to	
	348	see them all doing something different for a change. You	
	349	never know they might enjoy it.	
	350	Perhaps that's something we do then; ban the footie and	
	351	put on different things.	
	352	Oh yeah and have a war on.	
	353	Well we could talk to them first. You never know they	
	354	might have some ideas of their own. Like we've said	
	355	before, they like it when we start a game. They usually	
	356	join in, even if it's only for a little while. We could try it	
	357	anyway.	
	358	Anything's worth a try. Change is as good as a rest as	
	359	they say.	

360 **The children had lunch and then some time to play**  
 361 **outside. Do you think the timing works okay?**

Timing fine 362 It does now. When the new ones come in September it  
 363 takes longer so they maybe only get a little play but now  
 Routine 364 they've got the routines.  
 365 It goes fairly smoothly doesn't it? It's sort of in, eat, out,  
 Smooth - important 366 play.  
 367 Aye they have time to eat. It's not a rush like, mind some  
 Time to eat 368 of them do bolt their food down.  
 369 Aye but they don't have to.  
 Children motivated 370 No, but they want to get out to play.  
 to play 371 To be honest if they had longer outside I think they might  
 372 get a bit bored.  
 Too long outside - 373 And cold.  
 bored, cold 374 Yes, but they do need some time to play.  
 Need to play 375 I think it's about right.  
 376 I couldn't cope with longer anyways.  
 'Cope' 377 We'd have time to do something else though with them  
 378 wouldn't we? At least if we got them involved in new  
 More time to 379 things the novelty might distract them from falling out or  
 play different 380 fighting.  
 things  
 Falling out 381 I noticed that whenever anybody was messing about  
 fighting 382 you all used the child's name and called them over.

Should we name 383 Well you should.  
 Can't shout 384 You can't shout across the yard at them.  
 Know children 385 This is where it's good we know our kids see. We know  
 their names 386 their names. There's none of this, 'Oi you'.  
 Control / Manage 387 If you did that they could pretend you didn't mean them.  
 388 That's right you call their name and they like stop and  
 389 look over at you. Then you can get them to come to you  
 Not chasing 390 so you're not kinda chasing after them. You're the one  
 391 that's in control like. And then you can make sure there's  
 Supervisor in 392 none of their mates about and have a quiet word like.  
 Control 393 That's right, it's none of the other children's business.  
 Discrete or 394 They don't have to know all the sins.  
 395 Yeah I like to start with a quiet word. They don't lose  
 Quick word 396 face in front of their mates and you can sort of reason  
 Child not  
 lose face  
 Reason

*Length of lunch  
is a factor*

*Routine being  
smooth*

*Shared under lan  
g routine*

*Children motivated  
to play*

*Too long - bored  
and cold*

*Supervising is a  
challenge - coping*

*More time - could  
do more, differe*

*Falling out  
fighting*

*Knowing names  
important*

*Knowing names  
helps to  
manage / control*

*Discrete word  
with child*

*Child's self-image  
- public image.*

*Reasoning*

Positive nature	397	with them. Appeal to their better nature, cos they all have one.	Children have better natures - whole child
of children	398		
Don't shout	399	If you shout and yell it doesn't get you anywhere.	Limited effect of shouting
Respect children	400	Aye, except your blood pressure goes through the roof.	Shouting affects supervisors
'Have it in for you'	401	No, you have to respect them really. That way they don't have it in for you either. You always keep your relationship on a positive footing.	Positive relationship with children
Positive relationship	402		Children bear grudge
Sound like you mean it	403	You've got to sound like you mean it though.	Be convincing
it	404	It is more effective to have that close contact with them.	Close contact - off
'Watch'	405	We've got to watch that we don't go on and on. That's when you see their eyes glaze over and you've lost them.	Short call - effective
Don't go on and on	406	It's best to keep it short.	Time is limited
Short	407	Well we don't have time for much more do we?	Peer pressure - infl of audience
Audience power	408	You don't need an audience.	Difficult to control large group
- encourage	409	Well it helps us as well doesn't it? If the audience maybe jeers or something that might encourage the one you're dealing with to smirk or something and then it gets out of hand.	Restrict shouting to effective
One of hand	410	Don't get me wrong, sometimes I do shout. If like they're about to do something, maybe lash out, you shout the names loudly to get their attention, to shock them into stopping.	Show you care
Do shout to intervene	411	Aye but you don't do it often, cos then it wouldn't work, they'd just all think, 'Oh there she goes again, Mrs So and So blowing her gasket again'.	Children don't understand some of the control
Shock them	412	You have to show you care about them.	Set the rules for a purpose
	413	Yeah, but they can't always see there's a reason for not doing things, and you're stopping them because you care, and you won't make a show of them because you care.	Keep the rules - enforce
Show you care	414	Rules should be there for a purpose.	Children like to be rule - challenge & test
Children don't	415	Aye but you've got to be careful. Rules are for breaking aren't they?	
See reasons	416	Some of them can be arbitrary. Like walk on the left hand side, which is a bit arbitrary. You can understand it in a secondary school where there's thousands of kids milling around but it's very difficult to find a sensible reason for it here.	They don't expect responsibility for rules
Rules for purpose	417		They have to decide
- and for breaking	418	They didn't even enforce it after the first couple of days. It started well.	
Service rules	419	It did but since they don't tend to cause accidents by	
Not enforced	420		
	421		
	422		
	423		
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	436		

Children should see point

437 bumping into each other by walking on the same side of  
 438 the corridor, it's not a very sensible rule really.  
 439 And the children didn't see the point of it either and they  
 440 should if you've any chance of trying to get them to keep  
 441 to it.

Children need  
to see point  
of rule

#### 442 Are there others ways of managing children?

Has to avoid problems  
know something will 'blow'  
Talk to children  
Fight - how to handle  
Lack of confidence  
Children challenge you  
Look you in the eye  
No fear - few  
Be confident  
Shows who's boss  
Top dog person  
Don't show weakness  
Children detect weakness  
Children know teachers

443 I'd like to know how to avoid problems, like incidents,  
 444 y'know. Sometimes I think you know something is going  
 445 to blow but you know that just ignoring them or giving  
 446 them a job or whatever isn't going to be enough. So, what  
 447 d'you do then?  
 448 Well I'd talk with them.  
 449 Yes I know that but like, well, let's say a fight? Y'know  
 450 it's going to happen so how do you wade in there or  
 451 whatever it takes to stop it happening?  
 452 I know what you mean I'm not so confident when you  
 453 have some of them that challenge you. It's the ones that  
 454 look you right in the eye and there's no fear in them.  
 455 They just don't care.  
 456 Aye but there's not so many of them.  
 457 Not but it just takes one and then you've got a situation.  
 458 I think it's about being able to handle yourself. To be  
 459 confident like. Showing them who's boss. Not telling  
 460 them off like or being horrible to them but just somehow  
 461 you being the top dog, or such like.  
 462 You can't show them a weakness. They sniff it out and  
 463 they go for it.  
 464 They do the same with the teachers. There's one or two of  
 465 them have no idea and the kids know it.

Lack of confid  
in dealing with  
incidents.  
Can read situat.  
and know someth  
with 'know'

Lack of confidence  
children challenge

Children look you  
the eye like that  
They have no fear

Be confident - p2

Supervisor is the

Supervisor is top

Children sniff out  
weakness in  
supervisors and  
teachers

#### 466 So, how do you communicate that you can handle 467 things at lunchtime?

It's sort of in you  
You  
Either got it  
or you haven't

468 I don't know really, it's just sort of in you, isn't it?  
 469 You've either got it or you haven't.  
 470 Yeah but I think sometimes there is things that you can  
 471 do that maybe we don't do.  
 472 Like what d'you mean?

Inner confidence  
strength

	473	Well like knowing how to hold onto a child so's not to	Want to learn
Know how to	474	hurt them.	physical intervent
hold without	475	Or be accused of assault.	- need for this
hurting	476	Aye you have to think about that.	fear of accusation
Fear of accusation	477	That's right, so you have to know what to do properly.	Teachers don't ha
Teachers don't ha	478	I don't think even the teachers know that.	ve to physically
	479	It's knowing what to say and how and when that	intervene. They
Has to diffuse	480	sometimes diffuses things.	take calls.
Do without	481	I think we do that without thinking really. We just sort of	Need to know h
thinking - just know	482	know when to.	to diffuse.
Individual differences	483	Yeah but some do it better than others and I think we	Individual super
between supervisors	484	could all do with being reminded or maybe even learning	have different
(skills)	485	something different. Like I think S. could show me how	skills
Shows each other	486	she manages that group that always hang around in the	Shows each other
Mouthful / ignore	487	bushes. I just get a mouthful or they ignore me but they	Children give mouth
some supervisors	488	don't with her.	or ignore individual
Wouldn't dare	489	They wouldn't dare.	supervisor
'It's just me'	490	Yeah but why not? What do you do?	Supervisors have inner
Kids no where they	491	Well I don't know really. I'm just me.	core skills 'It's just m
stand with supervisor	492	I guess the kids know where they stand with you. You've	Face / challenge
	493	never taken any nonsense off them.	Children knowing w
Have to keep to	494	Well no but I wouldn't with my own kids either. You	they stand
word.	495	have to keep to your word.	Act as a parent
Best bits of being a	496	It is about being a parent sometimes isn't it? You just use	More than being a
parent	497	the best bits of that sometimes.	parent - contextual
Treat children as own	498	I think I do. I think I'm the same with the kids here as I	factors
	499	was with my own.	Recognise lack of skill
More than being a	500	But when you're at home you don't have a couple of	but unsure what th
parent. Situations	501	hundred of them fighting over one football do you? There	need to learn
different	502	must be more to it than that. So what is it that's more than	Learn from each
Not sure what	503	just being a good mum, or dad? What is it we're doing or	other at lunchtime
they need to learn	504	not doing and what do we need to learn better like?	book learning - not
	505	Do you mean get a qualification or something, go on a	like it really is
	506	course like?	when you're out
	507	What do you mean, like training or something?	there
Learning from	508	Well not going on a course but having someone there to	
each other	509	show you and talk to you when you were doing it.	
	510	I see what you mean. I wouldn't want a course because	
Learning during	511	it's all well and good book learning but it's nothing like it	
lunchtime not	512	really is when you're out there with them and they all	
from books.			

lot of demand	513	want you at the same time and it's noisy and they need to	
	514	eat their dinners fast.	
Hellish	515	It's hellish sometimes isn't it?	Hellish sometimes - demands
	516	<b>You were saying about having somebody out with you</b>	
	517	<b>to show you things?</b>	
	518	Yes, it's like, what's it called? Learning with Nanny.	
Learning with Nelly	519	Nelly.	Learning with Nelly
	520	That's it. Somebody kind of showing you on the job.	
Have to experience it to teach it	521	I don't think until you've actually done this job that	
	522	anybody could tell you what it's like or how to do it.	Understand the job to train others
	523	I bet teachers couldn't do it.	
Teachers couldn't do it	524	I'd like to see some of the mums doing it.	
Mums couldn't do it	525	Well we sort of teach each other things don't we?	Teachers/mums couldn't do it
Teach each other	526	How?	
	527	Remember when you first started and you said to me you	
Able to share concerns	528	didn't know how to talk to some of the older lads without	Able to talk honestly with each other
	529	them getting cheeky.	
	530	Oh aye, they were awful with me when I first started.	
	531	Well can you remember what we did? You came and	
Take lead from each other	532	stood with me and I chatted to them and included you in	
	533	the conversation and you took the lead from me. And I	Take lead from each other
	534	think the lads talked to me in one way and then just	
Nobody sets cheek to me	535	carried it on with you so's they weren't cheeky no more.	
	536	I don't get any cheek now. Nobody sets cheek to me.	found that a dad sets cheek
	537	<b>Do you think that sort of 'on the job' training would</b>	
	538	<b>be useful?</b>	
On job training all the time	539	I do but I think it needs to be all the time.	On-going on the job training
	540	But we'd have to get on well, and trust each other.	
Have to get on and have trust	541	Well we would because otherwise it could cause bother	
	542	between us.	Trust between tea
	543	I don't know. We get on well don't we?	
Moderate this not bossing or interfering	544	Yeah but think if I kept on coming up to you like, and	
	545	saying try this, try that, you'd end up thinking I was	Careful not to boss / interfere
	546	bossing you about and interfering.	
No time to show each other	547	If it was all the time you would but really would we have	
	548	the time?	May not have the time to train each other

	549	No that's the thing, we don't have a lot of time.	
	550	We don't have time to turn around sometimes.	No time to
No time to	551	I think we do it a lot though.	show each other
turn around	552	What, turn around?	
	553	No, showing each other. Or maybe we know each other	knowing each
Know each	554	and we know things that others don't like to do, or don't	other
other	555	feel confident with. We sort of just do that without	
Do it without	556	talking about it really. It's like you always talk to Mrs C.	Show each other
talking about it	557	but I can't. I don't know we just sort of rub each other the	without thinking
	558	wrong way sometimes. I don't know what it is. But like	talking about it.
Do things for	559	I've never asked you to, you always just say 'I'll go and	Supervisor / teacher
each other	560	speak with her' and that's it. Sorted.	conflict (personal)
	561	<b>What you seem to be saying is that you do support</b>	
	562	<b>each other by sharing skills but also taking on tasks</b>	
	563	<b>that you might be more confident with than others</b>	
	564	<b>are.</b>	
	565	Aye I think we do.	
Do things we	566	Yeah, we even do things for one another just cos we	Different skills and
know others	567	know somebody doesn't like that job.	interests
don't like	568	I hate First Aid stuff.	Do things others don't
Different skills /	569	Yeah now see I don't mind that.	like
interests			Team support
	570	<b>It seems that you've come to the point where you do</b>	
	571	<b>all of this without really formally agreeing to it.</b>	
	572	We have, but that's what working together is about isn't	Working together
There for each	573	it?	
other	574	Aye we've got to be there for each other else it'd be a	There for each other
	575	harder job.	
	576	It is hard, and it could be a lonely job if you felt there was	Potentially lonely
Could be lonely	577	nobody to turn to cos nobody else understands what it's	job.
	578	like.	
Nobody else	579	No it can be very hard some days. Some days there's	Nobody else
understands	580	nothing but trouble. Don't ask me why but some days it	understands
Nobody to	581	can be awful. If it's windy like, or if there was trouble on	
turn to	582	the estate the night before, or even if somebody's just that	Factor that
	583	way out.	influence - weather
Some days hard,			community
nothing but			individual
trouble			
Wind			
Community problems			
Individual issues -			

584 There was group of boys, who I felt looked as though  
 585 they had the potential to start messing about. One of  
 586 you went over to them. Can any of you recall that, or  
 587 have had a similar experience?

We know the children  
 Way of walking - can tell  
 Make yourself known.  
 'Catch a few eyes'  
 Distract  
 Good relationship will do as asked  
 Watch  
 Seems to work  
 Try different things  
 Works for child  
 With some doesn't make a difference  
 Let them know you're not daft.  
 Read them

588 I think I know which group you mean and you were right.  
 589 I know that group right, and you can tell, they've got a  
 590 look, or a way of walking and you know they may be  
 591 about to start something. You don't just stand there and  
 592 let it happen cos then it would be even worse to deal with.  
 593 No, you make yourself known. You hang around them, or  
 594 catch a few eyes.  
 595 I go over and spend time with them, just have a crack, get  
 596 their minds off what they were doing and let them know  
 597 I'm there.  
 598 Gives you chance to have a bit of banter cos if you get on  
 599 well with them they're more likely to do as you ask and  
 600 not treat you like something they've maybe stepped on in  
 601 the street.  
 602 They do that in the big school, secondary like.  
 603 I tend to stand and sort of watch, that seems to do the  
 604 trick.  
 605 Might there be other ways those incidents could be  
 606 dealt with?  
 607 Well what we do seems to work.  
 608 It's like with everything we do, we try this, it doesn't  
 609 work, we try something else, and so on, until we find a  
 610 way that works for us.  
 611 And for the child.  
 612 Yes because there are some, who will remain nameless,  
 613 that even standing by them makes not one bit of  
 614 difference. They just go ahead anyway.  
 615 I know who you mean and with them I maybes distract  
 616 them by giving them something to do, or talk to them.  
 617 Sometimes I even say, 'I know what you're planning so  
 618 don't even think about it'. You have to let them know  
 619 you're not daft.  
 620 They think they know us but we can read them like

Know child  
 Read child a situation  
 Eyes  
 Swiftly enter  
 Preserve chat - relation and respect - compliance  
 Watch  
 Treated poorly by some  
 Have effective strategies  
 Open to try other things for other and child  
 Individuals resist  
 Distract or talk  
 Explicitly express awareness  
 Read child like a book



	621	books.	
Seen it all before	622	We've seen it all before, well I have cos I've been here	Experience
	623	since I don't know when.	
Honest - pig's ear	624	To be honest there are times I think to myself, 'Well you	Honest reflection
Do as judge -	625	made a pig's ear of that'. Nobody needs to tell me that. I	Personal 'blame'
blame self	626	know it myself when I've misjudged something. It might	
	627	be cos I'm tired, or had a bad day, or just not taken a	
	628	minute to think about what I was doing. But I can stand	
	629	back with the rest of them and know when something's	
	630	not gone right.	
	631	<b>So what would you do then?</b>	
Depends on mood	632	That depends on a lot of things. Whose seen. If I'm in a	
	633	good mood and can laugh it off. I might make it up to the	Make amends
Make it up to a child (not say sorry)	634	child, if it was them that was in the middle of it like. I	
	635	might not say sorry but I'd make a point of having a nice	
Don't lose face	636	chat or something.	Honest with children
	637	You have to be careful to let the kids know you know	
	638	they know you didn't do well, without losing face with	Don't lose face
	639	them. If that makes sense.	Role model
Children need to see what they should do	640	I've apologised sometimes because I think the children	
	641	need to see that's what you should do. I do it quietly and I	
	642	might explain I was tired or whatever, or at the end of my	
	643	tether. Shows you're human.	
Not do it again	644	It brings you up though, so you're careful not to do it	Learn from experience
	645	again.	
Need to think what you're doing	646	Well that's right, you need to think about what you're	
	647	doing don't you? Especially as it's children we're dealing	
	648	with and if we get it wrong with them when they're so	Impact on child development
Impact on how they turn out	649	young it could have some impact on what they turn out	
	650	like.	
	651	Heavens, let's hope none of them turn out like me.	
	652	<b>As well as dealing with individuals, I noticed that you</b>	
	653	walked around a lot.	
Let presence be felt	654	You have to. Again it's letting your presence be felt.	Presence be felt
Space	655	You have to. It's a big space. You might not get to know	Space
	656	where the bother is.	
Bother			18 Bother - need to know where

	657	Also they need to be on their toes if they don't know	
	658	where you might turn up and when they've got to think a	
	659	bit more before they get into bother.	
Children need	660	Well that helps to stop the bullying doesn't it? They know	Move around
to be on their	661	there's no little corners they can hide behind because we	to reduce
been - you might	662	might just pop up there.	potential for
surprise them.	663	It makes us accessible too. If children don't like to walk	bullying
Stop bullying	664	over to us there's a chance we might wander over near to	
	665	them.	Accessible to
Accessible to	666	Again we get to know more of the kids, what they like	children
children	667	doing, who they like playing with.	
	668	Yes but we always have two by the doors.	Know more of +
Know more of	669	That's right, we have to monitor the doors to stop them,	the children
the children	670	well the juniors really, going in and out to the toilets and	
	671	maybe making a mess or getting up to goodness knows	Juniors - mess,
Monitor doors	672	what.	get up to things
Juniors - mess	673	What I was meaning though because there's two by the	- suspicious
getting up to	674	doors if anybody does need us they know there's always	
goodness knows	675	somebody there.	
what	676	It's security for them. Knowing where to find us.	Children know
Children know where	677	Well yeah, this means if there's an emergency, say first	where to find
to find supervisor	678	aid needed or a fight, they don't have to run all over the	supervisor
	679	place looking for an adult. They know there'll always be	Fights
	680	somebody at the door.	Be nearby
Being strict	681	We are strict about this at the junior door.	
Nearby	682	We're not like glued to the door but we're nearby.	Team
Rota	683	This is part of the rota too, so it's a team thing.	First ad
Team	684	I was interested in this issue of the team. There had	
	685	been an incident and I noticed one of you had dealt	
	686	with it, but then the children moved to another	
	687	supervisor to try to have it dealt with again.	
	688	Yes I know what you mean. I'd sort of got involved	Children seek
Children want	689	because I'd seen what had happened and I sorted it out.	additional adu
other supervisor	690	But then, as they do, they wanted somebody else involved	involvement
involved	691	so I went over just to say, 'Hang on a minute I'm dealing	
	692	with that'.	
Supervisor support	693	Oh I know what you mean cos they came over to me.	Back each other
each other / back	694	That's right and I just said, 'No go away it's been dealt	up - don't
each other			interfere.

	695	with'.	
Play us off	696	We have to do that otherwise they play us off or one of us	Children try to
	697	will do one thing and one will do another.	play them off
Sometimes hard	698	We do sometimes hand things on though don't we? We	
on - take it	699	maybes say, 'Oh I don't know what we'll do about that. I	
seriously.	700	think we need to talk to Mrs So and So'. It just sort of	Harding or gave
	701	makes them think it's being dealt with seriously.	serious message
	702	Yeah and it's good for us too because sometimes I don't	
Unsure how	703	know how to handle something but I like somebody else	
to handle -	704	to help me out.	know selves and
support of team	705	Well I don't like the tale telling, it really gets on my	each other and
	706	nerves so I have to ask somebody else because I just get	support each other
Aware of things	707	cross, and that doesn't help.	
don't like (tates)	708	We all do that though don't we? We know which of us is	
know which you	709	good at dealing with this problem, and which is good at	
is good at	710	dealing with that problem. Or even playing games. I hate	
something	711	them skipping ropes but see A. likes them so I'll suggest	
	712	they maybes go and ask her.	
Mr Nasty!	713	But as well sometimes there might be like the guilty party	
Mr Nice	714	and then the innocent one so having two people there to	
	715	sort things out can help.	Team approach -
	716	Like Mr Nasty and Mr Nice.	different styles
Got to know	717	We've got to know each other over the years and that	
each other	718	helps.	know each other
Turn to each	719	And we know we can turn to one another.	Turn to one and
other	720	More than you can to the teachers really.	
Teachers don't	721	'They don't understand what it's like out there.	No support from
support. Don't	722	Well they don't have time do they? They're too busy	teachers - don't
know what	723	thinking about the next lesson or whatever.	understand
it's like	724	In one incident there was clearly one who had been	
	725	the instigator and one who seemed quite innocent.	
	726	Both children were separated and listened to	
	727	individually. Why was that?	
Never know	728	Whenever anything happens between two you never	Perspective of
the full story	729	know the full story. You could be there for months and	individual who
light -	730	you could talk to everybody and his dog and all will have	is important.
from their	731	different versions of the same things. Probably all of them	
point of view	732	are right too, from their point of view. But what you do	

	733	have to do is give them ones that's mostly involved the	Listen to
Chance to	734	chance to say their bit or else it goes on and on and they	children - fair
say their bit	735	think you're being unfair.	Hear both sides
	736	They have to say what they think happened.	
Get it off	737	They have to get it off their chest and give their side of	
their chest	738	the story.	
	739	Sometimes you know it's maybe a misunderstanding and	
	740	you help them to sort it out. They maybe apologise and	
	741	that's the end of it.	
Listen to	742	You've got to listen to both stories. You've got to haven't	
both sides	743	you?	
	744	Sometimes that's it finished, you don't have to do	
	745	anything, just listen.	
Carry on in	746	Well yeah, I know if you don't they carry on going on	Deal with situa
class	747	about it in the class and then don't get on with their work	at the same -
	748	and then the teacher gets cross and it all blows up. You	can spill over
	749	have to deal with things and stop them getting out of	class
Deal with it -	750	hand.	
otherwise gets	751	Most of what goes on between the children is minor stuff,	Minor issues -
out of hand	752	and they can resolve things very easily. Sometimes it's	easily resolved
	753	the adult intervention that causes the bigger problems.	
Adult intervention	754	Yeah it's like when friends fall out and then the parents	Adult interven
causes bigger	755	do and then the kids make up the next day but the parents	can exacerbate
problems	756	can't.	
	757	<b>I saw some buddies on the playground. Can you tell</b>	
	758	<b>me about them?</b>	
We instigated	759	We instigated this. We got it off the ground. With a	We
buddies	760	teacher. We sort of organised it together.	Buddies organ
	761	The School Council was involved too but I'm not sure	with a teacher
Teacher support	762	how because we don't really have any involvement in	Not involved in
	763	that.	School Council
Guide buddies	764	We do try to guide the buddies, suggest they keep an eye	Guide buddies
to keep eye /	765	on certain ones, or tell them to go over to see if they can	
see	766	help.	Eye / see - bud
	767	They sometimes come over and say, 'Can we do this' and	
	768	we might say, 'Yes', depending, or, 'No, but why not try	
Like to feel	769	this?'	
they're helping	770	They like to feel they're helping don't they? They think	Children like to

Our deputies			
(are they	771	they're our deputies.	
sheriffs)	772	It's good for them though isn't it to have some	Children - good to
Responsibility	773	responsibility?	have responsibility
Good for children	774	It's working better this time. We've done it before. All	
	775	they wanted was to get the bib but not do anything.	
	776	But I think that was because somebody else organised it	We organise and
We organised	777	and didn't really explain to them what it was about and	involve children
and explained	778	didn't involve us, so we could guide them like we can do	and its better
and its better	779	now.	
	780	You're right. Sometimes it's when people don't tell us, or	
Problem - don't	781	ask us, that's the problem.	Not involving
tell or ask	782	They need to remember that it's us that's out there five	supervisors is an
supervisors	783	days a week, all lunchtime, come rain or shine, We know	issue
	784	what goes on, we know where the problems are, we have	
We know - we're	785	an idea as to what might work.	Supervisors are
there	786	We've set up teams of buddies, so they work one day a	there - they know
	787	week and this helps, because before it was the same ones	about lunchtimes
	788	each day and they just got bored.	- experts
	789	Well they need to play as well don't they?	Children need to play
Buddies need to	790	I think that they like our support.	
play too	791	Well they're supporting us really aren't they?	Buddies support
	792	I suppose they are.	Supervisors - must
Like our support	793	They do things for us and that helps, like watch the little	Watch little or
Watch little	794	ones.	(buddies)
ones	795	It helps them to take responsibility. Collecting the toys at	Children -
Helps them to	796	the end.	responsibility helps
take responsibility			them
	797	I observed that you do a lot of talking with the	
	798	children, playing with them and supervising	
	799	behaviour. I also noticed that you sometimes stood	
	800	back and just watched. Can you talk about that?	
Constantly	801	You've got to be constantly watching.	Constantly watch.
watching	802	Some may think it's just chatting but we're vigilant all the	and listening
Vigilant	803	time. Eyes everywhere. Over shoulders and head and	
Eye everywhere	804	watching.	Vigilant
	805	You've got a tuned ear as well. You pick up when	
Tuned ears	806	something's not right, if they're too quiet, or if there's a	Acceptable noise
Pick up level	807	particular squeal.	level - changes
of sound	808	There's a level of noise that tells you things are just	about

Normal noise	809	normal.	
Too quiet /	810	I've had to tell someone for screaming when they're	
too loud a	811	playing because it jars me, and I look up thinking there's	
problem	812	been a terrible accident.	
	813	Some days the whole level of noise is just greater and it	Adults don't
Noise can be	814	happens for reasons that are never entirely explicable, to	understand
greater, not	815	an adult anyway.	noise changes
sure why	816	When it's windy or a full moon.	
Wind / moon	817	You learn, I think, to gauge the atmosphere.	Learn to gauge
Learn to gauge	818	I think they need to know, the kids, that we're looking at	atmosphere
atmosphere	819	everything. It's no good being busy.	Looking at
Looking at	820	Well no sometimes the quieter ones only come up to you	everything,
everything	821	when you're not doing something with somebody else.	Quiet children
	822	No what I was meaning was if they think you can't see	have needs
Quiet children	823	them they're likely to get up to mischief.	
need access	824	Oh I see what you mean.	If not surprises
Mischief	825	I find that if I stand back and just watch I learn all sorts of	children get up
Stand back	826	things that I might not have noticed if I'd been rushing	to mischief
Watch	827	about doing other things. You sometimes see a different	Watch - learn
Different order	828	side to some children. There can be ones who are	about children
of children	829	absolutely awful but then they're really kind to the	
Dishestry?	830	younger children.	Children differ
No time to stand	831	I've seen it the other way round, where the quiet ones,	personas
and look	832	where butter wouldn't melt and all that and then you see	
	833	them giving a right mouthful to somebody.	No time to look
Discussion between	834	We don't often have the time though do we, just to stand	
themselves -	835	and look?	
exploring	836	I don't know I think each lunchtime we do, for just a few	
Listen to and	837	minutes. I try to anyway.	Pressure to look
learn from	838	Oh, I'll maybe try that too. I always think you have to	busy
each other	839	look busy.	Feel they are
Pressure to	840	Well you never know who's watching do you?	being watched
look busy	841	We shouldn't have to worry about that though as long as	
Watching children	842	we're doing our job. I think watching the children, getting	Job is about
knowing them	843	to know them, being available if need be. I think that's	watching, know-
being available	844	what our job is about, not just dealing with problems.	being available is
Not just dealing	845	Some don't see it that way though do they?	just dealing
with problems	846	Some don't even think about it at all as long as we're not	with problems
	847	bothering them.	
Some don't see it			Others view their
like that			23 job differently
Don't think of it			Others don't think
As long as not			- don't want to
bothering them			be bothered.

	848	<b>If it's wet or windy, who decides what should happen?</b>	
Exchange looks	849	We do really. Sometimes I'll just say to the Head, 'Indoor	Head decides
We get on with it	850	play today?' She'll sort of look and we exchange looks	Supervisors deal with it
	851	and we get on with it.	
	852	If we're happy to deal with the puddles or whatever she	
Leaves to us	853	leaves it up to us.	
Need to get out - rid of energy	854	They need to get out though don't they? To get rid of that	Need to get a - physical need - run
Nightmare	855	energy.	Spills over into class
Messy room	856	If they haven't been out it can be a nightmare in the	
Like caged animals	857	afternoon.	Indoor play - messy
Need to run	858	Aye the teachers don't like it. The rooms can be messy	Caged animals can't get out
	859	and the kids are like wild animals that's been caged.	
	860	They need a run around don't they?	
	861	I don't know why we can't take a class in at a time to	
	862	have a run around the hall.	
	863	Now there's idea. Why haven't we thought of that?	Limited opportunities to think and solve problems
Hadn't thought before	864	Well I've never thought of it before now. I'm only	
	865	thinking now cos we're chatting.	
Should think more.	866	We should maybe think about doing that. We could talk	keen to consult
Consult	867	to Mrs H. see what she thinks.	
	868	<b>Let's go back to the dining hall for a moment. You did</b>	
	869	<b>a fair amount of opening packets, checking what had</b>	
	870	<b>been eaten. Is this something you feel is an important</b>	
	871	<b>aspect of your role?</b>	
Open packets	872	It is, and tidying tables. Basically they can't eat if they	Role - practical tasks
Tidy tables	873	can't open packets and they can't sit down to a messy	Teach/show independence
	874	table.	Age differences - older children don't need practical help.
Older ones don't need it	875	We don't do it for the older ones but we need to show the	
	876	little ones how to open things and how to tidy up after	
	877	themselves.	
	878	Some things are awkward to open and the trays aren't the	
	879	easiest to manage.	
We're there to help children enjoy lunch and look after them	880	That's what we're there for isn't it, to help children to	
	881	enjoy their lunch and look after them when they play?	Role - enjoy lunch look after
	882	You have to teach some of them. Which hand to put the	teach more
	883	knife in and how to cut things up.	
Teach them table manners.	884	You have to remind them about please and thank you.	

	885	On the whole most of them do, and you get a smile.	
	886	We go round some of them and open their lunch boxes to	
'See' what	887	see what's been eaten, because they can be fly like.	Visual
they've eaten	888	Throwing it away when nobody's looking and there are	Language
Can be fly	889	some that hardly eat anything so we have to let their	
	890	parents know.	
	891	It might just be that they don't like whatever sandwiches	Children fly
Tell mammy	892	mammy is making so we can tell them.	but they know
	893	It's just a few like that and you get to know them and	Communication w.
Eye on	894	keep an eye on.	parents (lunches)
	895	There are one or two have conditions and dietary	Conditions / diet
Conditions / diet	896	requirements and they have to eat what's in their lunch so	- informed.
Eye on	897	we keep an eye on them.	
	898	<b>Do you get information about those children?</b>	
	899	We do, good job really. There's usually a photo up and	
Information and	900	the information and the Head makes sure we know, and	Informed but
photo - informed	901	the canteen staff.	not consistently
	902	I have to watch some of the others though because they	lack of systems
Watch	903	might offer them something they shouldn't have, not on	
	904	purpose like.	
	905	<b>Do you get other information about children?</b>	
	906	Hit and miss really. Some teachers will tell us things and	
Hit and miss	907	some won't.	
communication			
	908	<b>What sort of things are you told about?</b>	
	909	If there's a problem at home. If they have problems with	Informed about
Problem at home	910	their behaviour.	behaviour
Behaviour	911	Or learning even.	learning
Learning	912	But we don't really have proper systems for it. It just	home
	913	depends.	
Don't have proper	914	I don't think we need to know some things though. Some	
systems	915	of it is private and I think the mums would go mad if they	
	916	thought we knew.	
Private	917	Aye but we wouldn't tell anybody would we?	Respect boundaries
	918	I know but I think we need to be careful and not pry.	between them and
Confidential			home
Not pry			



Red gloves	919	We wouldn't be prying it'd just be if the little'un was	Sensitivity
	920	upset or angry so's we'd need to know and use our kid	
	921	gloves.	
	922	<b>Can you for a moment think back to the lunchtime</b>	
	923	<b>you've just had? What do you think went well during</b>	
	924	<b>that lunchtime, and why?</b>	
Normal lunch - got on with it children got on	925	Well we're still here so it must have been all right.	We get on / children got (separate).
	926	It was just a normal lunchtime really. We got on with our	
	927	jobs and the children got on with what they do.	
	928	It was all okay really wasn't it?	
	929	It's because we know what the routines are.	Routines
We know routines	930	And we work as a team.	
team	931	Yeah I think that's important. Us working together. If we	Team work together and with anything.
	932	do that then we can deal with anything.	
Us. Work together - deal with anything	933	For most of the time the children just got on with things.	
they know what we want	934	They know what we want.	Children know adults agree
	935	<b>And what is that?</b>	
	936	Well for them to get on with each other and to play	Work cooperatively
Get on	937	cooperatively.	
Cooperative	938	Which they can do.	Most children cooperate.
	939	Most of them do really most of the time.	
Most do	940	And if they don't we want them to listen to us, to sort out	
Listen to us	941	the problem and then get back on behaving themselves.	
	942	<b>How do the children know that's what you want?</b>	
Just do	943	They just do.	Children just know our cues but we remind
	944	We remind them often enough don't we?	
Remind them	945	<b>How? Do you tell them to get on with each other?</b>	
Talk	946	When we talk to them, if there's been a problem we do.	

They just do	947	But what if there hasn't been a problem? How do they	
	948	know what you want them to do?	
Just know	949	I don't know really. They just do.	Children just know what super want.
	950	It's like us being parents again, they're just children	
	951	again, they just know.	
	952	Some must be born knowing it.	Unspoken agreement and understand
Might never have to say anything	953	It is funny isn't it? How some just get on with things on	
	954	the playground and you might never have to say anything	
	955	to them.	
	956	There's a lot like that. It's about knowing how to behave	
	957	and how to play.	
Don't know how to play	958	But like we've said there's a lot that don't know how to	Some need play lessons
	959	play. They need play lessons some of them.	
Learn from each other	960	I think the younger ones watch what the older ones do	Peer coaching
	961	and they learn from them. So they learn which parts of	
	962	the playground they can play in. They learn how to talk to	Peer peer role models
	963	each other.	
Peer role models	964	Some could do without learning some of that.	
	965	What do they learn from you? How do they learn	
	966	what you want of them?	
	967	D'you know I don't know. They must just have been	Understanding developed through peer support
Learn from ones that be with supervisors	968	taught good manners and respect for elders and all that. I	What supervisors
	969	guess they learn from the other children how to be with	
	970	us.	
Praise - pick up from	971	We praise the good ones so they must pick up from that.	Children learn experience / learn
	972	They do have a sixth sense though don't they?	What supervisors
Sixth sense	973	How d'you mean?	
	974	If I'm in a bad one they know not to mess with me and I	
	975	haven't even said anything to them.	
Tell from your face	976	They can maybes tell from your face.	Non-verbal sign communicate
	977	It's like when we've had a supervisor that was a bit soft	
Bit soft run rings round	978	with them they've run rings around them, even the quieter	
	979	ones. They know don't they?	
They know	980	D'ya remember that one that had hell on? Oh she was	Children read adults
	981	awful. She couldn't make anything of them, not even the	
Couldnt make anything of them	982	new starters. Day one there'd be chaos if she went near	Supervisors 'ma
	983	them. I don't know what it was but she just had to look at	children what they are.

	984	them to get their selves worked up.	
	985	<b>Are you saying that the children can read adults in</b>	
	986	<b>some way?</b>	
Read us like books	987	That's a good way to put it. They do. They read us like	Children can read adults
	988	books.	too.
	989	Even if they can't read an actual book.	
	990	<b>Thinking again about the lunchtime you've just had.</b>	
Thinking is hard	991	<b>What didn't go so well?</b>	
	992	Oh, let's think. It's hard isn't? Thinking like, what	Challenge of reflection and re
	993	happened.	
Nobody to play with	994	What about S. who wanted to stay in because she didn't	Friendship issue
	995	have anybody to play with? She often does that and today	
	996	I didn't really have the time to involve her in a game so I	
	997	just told her she had to come out.	
Too busy to handle well	998	Well we all do that sometimes don't we? Not handle	Too busy to hand situation well a g the time
	999	things well because we're busy.	
Football	1000	Some of the football was a bit of a problem, as usual. The	
bigger ones	1001	bigger ones were hogging it.	Age-bigger ch. Football-dominant + prob
Lining up - stragglers	1002	Of course there was the usual problems at lining up time,	Lining up a prob
	1003	the stragglers coming along.	Putting teachers &
Teachers joke	1004	What the kids or the teachers?	
	1005	Aye both.	
	1006	<b>How could it have been better?</b>	
More of us - more time	1007	Maybe more of us so we would have the time.	More adults need to spend time w children (too devel ing)
Teachers spend time with boys	1008	Or maybe teachers spending more time with them, the	
to resolve footie	1009	boys like, so that they don't have problems with the	
Children need to learn how to play	1010	footie.	
Older spoil	1011	Well they all need that don't they? Bit of time on how to	
Top dogs rule the roost	1012	play together.	
	1013	When you do an activity on the playground the Years 5	Older children sp activities
	1014	and 6 spoil the games don't they?	Age hierarchy
	1015	They get to thinking they're top dogs and they can rule	Age-top dogs rule over
	1016	the roost.	
Us that rule the roost	1017	Little do they know it's us that rules the roost. Well we	28 Supervisors 'rule the roost'.

- 1018 try to anyway.
- 1019 **How do you mean?**
- 1020 I suppose without them knowing it really we have to let *Children need to*
- 1021 them know that it's us that's in charge like. It's not like a *know supervisors*
- 1022 battle or them and us sorta thing but we have got to make *are in charge*
- 1023 sure everyone is alright.
- 1024 Aye they all need a fair crack at the whip at lunchtimes. *Fairness - have*
- 1025 Be able to have a go at whatever they want. It's not just *good at whatever*
- 1026 for the older ones. *they want*
- 1027 They can bully a bit can't they? Thinking they can get *Older bully / boss*
- 1028 away with bossing the little-un's about. *younger*
- 1029 But we don't let them mind.
- 1030 **Was there anything about the way the lunch period**
- 1031 **was organised that could have been changed to**
- 1032 **improve things?**
- 1033 Teachers could come out on time just before we blow the *Teachers not*
- 1034 whistle. *out onely*
- 1035 Yeah that's a problem. Well it can be. *way*
- 1036 See we get the kids to come to line up and then we have *Waiting for*
- 1037 to stand and wait for the teachers and well y'know what? *teachers*
- 1038 It's like keeping bees still in a line. So needless to say we
- 1039 then have to spend ages getting at them to be quiet and
- 1040 stand still, and then some of them wander off to have
- 1041 another kick of the ball.
- 1042 I find it hard knowing who's in charge when the teacher *Confusion over*
- 1043 is there. *who is in*
- 1044 I think the kids do too. *charge*
- 1045 Last time we were talking about rewards and that. We
- 1046 don't really do much of that and like you were saying
- 1047 you'd given a mention in assembly. I think I'd like to do *Want to reward*
- 1048 that. *children*
- 1049 We could give out stickers or something couldn't we?
- 1050 I agree we could look more at rewarding the children.
- 1051 I think we should be able to take action as well. *Want to take*
- 1052 Like what? *action over*
- 1053 Deciding that they can't have a play at lunchtime the next *minor issue*

	1054	day, or something. I don't know. But at the moment	
	1055	things like that have to go through the Head. Well I don't	
	1056	see why we can't sort some of the minor things out	
	1057	ourselves.	
	1058	I'd like to get an apology if they've been rude.	Respect for supervisors to be same as teacher
Want apology	1059	Where there any particular barriers?	
	1060	I don't know really. Maybe more things to play with.	Want more things to play safely with
Want more things to play with but this can cause problems	1061	Sometimes that can make it worse cos they fall out over	
	1062	things or things get lost, or they get hit in the face by a	
	1063	flying beanbag.	
	1064	Y'know they do this Circle Time now in the classes? I	Circle Time to resolve issues
Circle Time	1065	think they should do some of that to sort out problems.	
	1066	I think they do. I know Mrs T.'s class talked about the	
	1067	squabbles over the games box.	
Don't know what's going on	1068	See now I didn't know that. This is where we need to talk	Lack of communication
	1069	together more.	
	1070	Y'know you were saying we need more of us? Well I	
	1071	don't know if that would help.	
	1072	How do you mean?	
Too many supervisors changes how things are	1073	Well with more of us we'd be different wouldn't we? The	Optimum size for effective group/team
	1074	children would have more of us to play off against each	
	1075	other. I don't think it's too bad with just us. Yes we could	
More time to talk and play	1076	perhaps have more time to talk and play but I don't think	
	1077	we do too bad a job as it is.	
	1078	I still don't think we get to hear what's going on. Mrs S.'s	Lack of communication causes diffen
Not informed - makes it harder for us.	1079	class were late for lunch because they'd been swimming	
	1080	but we hadn't been told. M. had been excluded but we	
	1081	didn't know. It makes it harder for us.	
	1082	I know what you mean. I'd come down hard on a little'un	
	1083	the other day and he got all upset. Turns out things aren't	
	1084	good at home but nobody told me that.	
Lack of confidence to deal with things	1085	Y'know what I think the problem is? We don't have the	Supervisors lack confidence
	1086	confidence to deal with things ourselves.	
	1087	I'm not being funny but we don't get paid an awful lot.	Lack pay
	1088	Why should we take the hassle?	
	1089	Yes but some of this would make things easier for us.	Should speak up make job easier for ourselves
Don't get paid much, why take the hassle.	1090	I think you're right. We should speak up more.	
	1091	But we need to find a way of doing this and we've tried	
Should speak up more Tried before			

1092 meetings with the Head before.

1093 Can you think of ways that you may be able to  
1094 improve the situation for yourselves?

Head doesn't have time  
Not a priority  
We get paid so should sort it  
But need her permission  
Talk off  
Need to be clear about what they can change.  
Debate amongst themselves  
Can't  
Why not, the teachers do.  
There are things we can do - fit in.  
No need to ask Head  
No point sending kids in - not a punishment

1095 Well we've tried talking to the Head but she doesn't have  
1096 the time or makes promises but nothing happens.  
1097 It's not a priority for her though is it?  
1098 Well it should be.  
1099 No I mean there's a lot of things that she has to get sorted  
1100 and I suppose it's not high on the list of priorities. Maybe  
1101 she thinks we get paid to do the job so we should sort it  
1102 out more.  
1103 We would do if we had permission to.  
1104 When I'd done something off my own bat I've been told  
1105 off about it. You can't have it both ways.  
1106 No but maybe we need to sort out which bits of the job  
1107 we can change and which bits we can't. I'm not clear  
1108 about that, are you?  
1109 Suppose not. What do you think?  
1110 I know what you mean. There is things that we could do  
1111 without talking to her about. We change the rotas  
1112 ourselves don't we?  
1113 Yes but what about giving out sanctions? We don't do  
1114 that.  
1115 Well we can't can we?  
1116 Why not? The teacher's do, it's just the same.  
1117 It's not. We're not teachers. We couldn't send a kid home  
1118 for messing about.  
1119 No I wasn't meaning that. Things like the level system  
1120 that we have, time out, removing privileges. I don't  
1121 know. Just sort of fitting in with some of the things that  
1122 teachers can do. At least we can deal with some of the  
1123 problems rather than asking the Head to. I mean we're in  
1124 charge so we should let the children know that we sort  
1125 out problems. We don't need to refer to the Head. I think  
1126 in the long run it would be better.  
1127 I agree with you there. I don't know why we bother to  
1128 send kids in. They're nice and warm. The secretary talks  
1129 to them and then nothing happens. I think if we kept them

Head let her  
down.

Limits on pax.  
Not a priority  
for the Head

Want permission  
sort things out

Need clarity  
about their do  
and powers

Limits on sanctions.  
They can impose

Could fit into  
existing system  
and adapt

We're in charge  
and should let  
children know

Sending in is  
not a sanction

Nothing happens  
if child sent  
in.

Keep out

With us

Some need more

Sort between ourselves

We decide, we get paid, we're adults

Now you're talking

We could have some things different

Get her sat down  
Get her to listen

United front

Be more forceful

Stand up for ourselves

Coming up with ideas

Turn it into a proper meeting

To make us think

Could be better

We'll do that

1130 out with us, maybe had them stand against the wall or  
1131 even next to us. That would be more of a punishment.  
1132 For some it would.  
1133 Yes but some things, some kids do things that would need  
1134 more than that.  
1135 Yes but maybe we could sort that out between ourselves.  
1136 Decide what we want to do with them, rather than  
1137 referring to the Head. I mean we're adults. We get paid to  
1138 do the job. Only the really serious things should involve  
1139 the teachers.  
1140 Now you're talking, I think there is things that we should  
1141 say, 'Now here, we think it would be better if we did such  
1142 and such'. We could have some things different.  
1143 We maybe need to get her sat down and get her to listen  
1144 to us.  
1145 Not just the Head but the teachers as well.  
1146 We need, us supervisors, we need to get together to  
1147 decide what we want first. A united front so to speak.  
1148 You're right there. We need to be more forceful. Well I  
1149 don't mean nasty like, but I think we need to stand up for  
1150 ourselves more. Like we said before, we did have  
1151 meetings but they went by the wayside and we let them.  
1152 We shouldn't have done really.  
1153 While we've been talking, this time and the last time, we  
1154 keep coming up with ideas about things we could do, and  
1155 we could, couldn't we? We meet up at the start and we  
1156 could turn it into a proper meeting to decide what we  
1157 want to do and take it from there.  
1158 Aye I think we should an all.  
1159 It takes something like this to make you think doesn't it?  
1160 I mean there is a lot we do without thinking about it but if  
1161 we take just a bit time, and get our heads together we  
1162 could have it better.  
1163 We'll do that.

We could make  
minor problem

Refer on only if  
Necessary

It's our role to  
manage behavior

Need to be more  
assertive with  
Head and team

Together, agree  
what we want

Need to stand  
up for ourselves

We've got ideas

Have more for  
meeting together

1164 When I was observing, can you recall doing anything  
1165 and thinking to yourself, 'Oh no she will have seen me  
1166 do that', and why?

1167 I was stood at the door for ages stopping children from  
1168 going in to the toilet and I did think, 'I wonder what she  
1169 thinks of this?', because if you'd asked me I would have  
1170 had to say it's a waste of my time everyday but there isn't  
1171 a better way to do it. Or we haven't come up with one  
1172 anyway.

*Some routines  
seen pointless*

1173 It's a bit silly really I think, I mean we're making a rod  
1174 for our own backs on that one.

*Children make  
a game to  
challenge rout*

1175 How d'you mean?

1176 Well it's like a game isn't it? For them to see if they can  
1177 get in before we notice them, and then to see how long  
1178 they can stay in before we do something. I think we set  
1179 ourselves up sometimes.

1180 Aye, they're not daft. They know what makes a good  
1181 game.

1182 I wasn't bothered at all. I mean you know what's  
1183 involved and I think we do a reasonable job here and get  
1184 on with the children well. We may not be perfect but then  
1185 who is?

*Okay to do a  
'reasonable' job.*

1186 I feel the same. I just got on as normal and didn't worry.  
1187 In any case you'd made it clear you weren't judging us so  
1188 if we did make a hash of things well that's what the job is  
1189 like isn't it? It was a normal day really.

1190 Actually it bothers me more when teachers come out and  
1191 I do sometimes cringe when things happen but then it's  
1192 hard to know who is in charge. Us or the teacher? So it's  
1193 confusing really.

*Feel teachers  
judge*

*Confusion over  
who is in charge*

1194 In a similar vein anything that you wished I'd seen,  
1195 and why?

1196 I can't really think there was.

1197 I don't even think we were different cos you were there.

1198 No, I don't think the children were either.

1199 Well they've seen you before haven't they?

1200 The packed lunches lined up well today didn't you think?

*Don't understand  
why they do  
some things*

*Making a rod  
for our own  
back*

*Game to  
challenge*

*Set ourselves  
up*

*May not be  
perfect but  
brats okay*

*The job is making  
a hash sometimes*

*Cringe with  
teachers*

*Who is in  
charge?*



Good day/  
 ) bad day 1201 For the most part days are pretty much the same.  
 all similar 1202 Sometimes we might have a bad day. Sometimes we  
 1203 might have a good day. But it's all similar.  
 1204 I've worked here so long I could say that there probably  
 Seen/heard/dt 1205 isn't anything that I've not seen or heard or done before.  
 done it all 1206 D'you know what? I'd love there to have been more  
 before 1207 playing with the children because then you'd see how  
 Love children 1208 much they like that. I think you'd have enjoyed it too.  
 play and play 1209 You might have been tempted to join in with some  
 with them 1210 skipping or French skipping.  
 Too busy some 1211 Yeah but some days you just don't get chance do you?  
 days 1212 No, but it's part of our job too and it's what we do. I  
 1213 don't think anyone realises that or how much time we  
 Positive interaction 1214 spend positive like with the kids. It's not just about  
 not just chivvy 1215 chivvyng them into the dining hall and telling them off.  
 and telling off 1216 There's a lot more that we do and it's hard to explain it.  
 1217 You have to see it really.  
 Nobody tells you 1218 Aye nobody tells you those bits do they? And them's the  
 1219 best bits. It's what makes you keep coming.  
 Children are 1220 Children are a treasure aren't they? I know they may  
 are treasure 1221 drive us up the wall sometimes but on the whole they're  
 1222 darlings. The things they come out with. The excitement  
 Excitement for 1223 they have for life, well sometimes.  
 life 1224  
 1225 **Anything else, in terms of your role as a lunchtime**  
 1226 **supervisor or lunchtimes generally, that you'd like to**  
**chat about, while you have chance?**  
 Do without 1227 It's like we said last time. It's hard thinking about what  
 thinking 1228 we do because so much of it we just do, without thinking.  
 1229 It's made us think though hasn't it? We maybes need to  
 Stand up a bit 1230 talk to the Head and say like, 'Why don't we try this?' I  
 more 1231 think we need to stand up a bit more.  
 Teachers need 1232 Certainly the teachers need to see more of what we do.  
 to see 1233 And I think they need to work with us more. It's like the  
 1234 level system we have. I was talking to a teacher and she  
 Different ideas 1235 had different ideas as to what the rules were as to what I  
 1236 understood them to be.  
 1237 I've liked chatting. I wasn't bothered about it when we  
 Liked chatting 1238 started but it's made me think. It's funny as well how  
 Made me 1238  
 think

Days are vary  
but must be  
same

Experienced

Joy of playing  
with children

Time is limited

Playing is part of  
the job

Chivvyng and  
telling off is part  
of job

Best bits keep y  
coming

Joy of children  
- treasure  
darlings

Children have  
excitement for  
life.

Value chatting  
but little bit

Need to assert

Need shared  
understanding in  
teachers

Like talking abt  
role

1239 similar we think about a lot of things, but then how  
 1240 different we are as well. That sounds daft doesn't it? That  
 1241 we're the same but different, but d'you know what I  
 Similar / Different 1242 mean?  
 1243 I do.  
 1244 It's like anything isn't it? If you have the time to talk and  
 Time to talk 1245 think you can think of all sorts of different ways of doing  
 and think 1246 the same thing.  
 1247 Yeah but we've got to remember we do this every day,  
 1248 and some of us have done it for years. If we can make it  
 1249 better then it's worth it.  
 Better for kids 1250 Aye and if we can make it better for them kids it's worth  
 - do worth it 1251 it, cos that's what we're here for isn't it?  
 What were 1252 You say it like that and it makes us sound grand doesn't  
 here for 1253 it?  
 We sound 1254 **Many, many thanks for taking the time to share your**  
 grand 1255 **thoughts with me. It has been fascinating and very**  
 1256 **useful.**

Supervisors a  
similar but  
different

Need time to  
think / talk

Value their  
and impact  
it has on  
children

We are 'gra